

**Fictional Maps: Representation and Space in Works by
Rushdie, Ondaatje and Hollinghurst**

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Declaration

I declare that the composition and contents of this thesis are entirely my own.

Gayle Pringle

To my parents, Robert and Anne Pringle, and to the memory of my grandfather,
Alexander Thornton.

Abstract

This thesis argues that mapping strategies can be identified in contemporary fiction by Salman Rushdie, Michael Ondaatje and Alan Hollinghurst. Moreover, this fiction displays similar insights and problems to those found in recent theoretical explorations of mapping and spatial politics.

Mapping is understood as the textual representation of spaces. The texts discussed use mapping strategies which foreground the extent to which spatial representations are politically significant. Henri Lefebvre's work is used to argue that spaces are constructed by social relations and the varying, sometimes conflicting, representations of spaces they produce. Dominant representations can be challenged as writers explore the potential for resistant representations of space, or processes of mapping which do not dominate others. However, resistant mapping strategies are themselves challenged by the difficulties of effecting political agency in spaces without establishing a dominant representation. Postcolonial and poststructuralist theorists are invoked to confirm that wider issues regarding the political implications of representation are also applicable to spatial representations in particular. The work of Fredric Jameson on postmodern space and cognitive mapping is examined as a case study of the insights and pitfalls of mapping strategies in theoretical works.

These issues and problems are then identified in the work of three novelists who use postmodern techniques and postcolonial contexts to represent spaces through mapping strategies. Salman Rushdie's work demonstrates the tensions that remain in any attempt to effect resistance to dominant spatial representations by continually problematising the capacity of representation to realise that resistance. The novels of Michael Ondaatje are used to confirm the necessity of mapping strategies to produce resistance, despite the consistently partial and unpredictable nature of both the maps and the resistance they provide. Alan Hollinghurst's novels challenge dominant representations of space, yet cannot assert a straightforward practice of resistance but continue to reflect the ambiguities that must be admitted in mapping strategies. This thesis argues that the capacity for resistance of mapping strategies must be continually re-evaluated.

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Introduction

What one is in the business of doing is mapping. (Salman Rushdie)¹

The purpose of this thesis is to identify strategies of mapping in contemporary fiction. Salman Rushdie's comment highlights the importance of mapping strategies both in his own work and that of other novelists. Discussing his novel *Midnight's Children*, he describes 'drawing' maps of post-independence India in order to explore its new identity as a postcolonial nation. Each of the novelists evaluated in this study depicts colonial and postcolonial spaces in narratives which offer new ways of understanding them. A fictional map is a representation of a space, in which knowledge gained by an individual subject of that environment, whether a country, a city, or even a domestic space, is then re-presented in narrative form. My study develops theoretical considerations of representation and space to demonstrate that mapping strategies are employed in fictional works by Salman Rushdie, Michael Ondaatje and Alan Hollinghurst.

My introduction explores three key terms: space, representation and mapping. Central to this thesis is the assumption that space is not a neutral or static entity, but rather that the spatial exists in a process of mutual definition with social relations; as Henri Lefebvre writes, '*(Social) space is a (social) product*'.² The understandings of space that exist in a society will produce that space according to the meanings associated with particular sites. Different social groups may understand and define one location in a variety of ways, none of which preclude the others. However, if these representations come into conflict, when, for example, an area of natural beauty

is also seen as a site of profit-making, or a site sacred to two separate religious groups becomes a question of which takes priority, social tensions are also those of the spaces in which they are enacted. Representations of space can be used to control access to particular places, to exclude those whose representations are not accepted and to designate behaviour appropriate for individuals within sites. Lefebvre argues that within social systems certain representations of space become dominant, and that social and political relations are organised accordingly. His work aims to challenge the apparent neutrality of space by highlighting the ways in which spaces are produced.

A consequence of Lefebvre's thesis is a plural conception of space, which argues that spaces are not innate, but can be understood and represented in a variety of ways. Maps have historically been used to assert particular representations of spaces. Aritha van Herk notes:

as long as humans have tried to plot the landscape around them, they have repeatedly diagrammed not only the world they saw, but their own vision and interpretation of that world. What results is a map – not a tracing of shape but a means of shaping.³

Maps create territories by designating boundaries and recognising and naming sites. These territories may not be universally agreed, and many progressive geographers have argued that maps have often been used to assert the domination of one interpretation of the world at the expense of others.⁴ Chandra Mukerji suggests that 'the meaning of land as property to be consumed and used by Europeans was written into the language of maps'.⁵ J. B. Harley argues that maps helped to legitimate European colonialism, offering the scramble for Africa, 'in which the European powers fragmented the identity of indigenous territorial organisation,' as 'almost a

textbook example'.⁶ Maps can be used to attempt to fix a representation of space in a manner which is appropriate to a particular group in power relations: Harley suggests that 'in the "wilderness" of former Indian lands in North America, boundary lines on the map were a medium of appropriation which those unlearned in geometrical survey methods found impossible to challenge'.⁷ Harley does not suggest that maps are inherently oppressive, but rather insists that the use of maps is inextricably bound up with a complex network of social and political relations.

Given the association of maps and imperial expansion, the prevalence of mapping strategies in recent critical theory is remarkable. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari use the image of the map in an attempt to go beyond hierarchical thinking, positing that a map need not be a fixed representation but 'is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification'.⁸ Deleuze describes Michel Foucault as 'a new cartographer' on the basis of Foucault's spatial model of power relations.⁹ Jean Baudrillard uses cartographic imagery to argue that it is impossible to differentiate between the real and that which is simulated in contemporary society, first insisting that the map 'precedes' and 'engenders' the territory it represents, before concluding that 'it is no longer a question of either maps or territories' as simulation dissolves the distinction between real and representation.¹⁰ The Marxist critic Fredric Jameson develops Baudrillard's ideas, arguing for a new conception of mapping which will allow for political agency to be reclaimed in an increasingly fragmented environment.¹¹ Jameson attempts to identify and challenge dominant systems of spatial organisation using a new system of mapping.

Mapping is not used in this sense to refer simply to the cartographic documents described by Harley and Mukerji. Theorists have adopted the term mapping to indicate a means of describing the positioning of individuals in the world, and the network of global relations that defines this environment. Mapping attempts to chart these relations in order to offer a representation of a particular space. The term mapping is used rather than the broader term of representation as a result of the specifically spatial focus of work which aims to represent the relations of a global environment.

Nonetheless, mapping remains a representational strategy, albeit one with a specifically spatial focus. Bruno Bosteels suggests that despite their often contradictory aims ‘models of marxist and poststructuralist cartography, irrespective of specific antagonisms, all critically engage a similar set of presuppositions underlying the possibility and impossibility of representation’.¹² Representation is here understood in the epistemological sense, in which knowledge of that which is outside the subject is then re-presented in a different form. Claire Colebrook observes that this is a process of mediation, arguing that ‘because knowledge relates to what is other than itself, it is situated in a relation, such that what it knows is not immediately present but must be re-presented’.¹³ Jacques Derrida observes that re-presentation occurs through a pre-existing system of signs, which will continue to attract new associations in the future. He writes, ‘because it has always already begun, representation therefore has no end’.¹⁴ Poststructuralist theorists argue that any single interpretation of a representation is therefore precluded. Theories of mapping must contend with their representational status. Throughout this thesis, the term mapping strategies is used to refer to the use of spatial models which investigate

their own status as representations. Such mapping strategies, it is argued, are apparent not only in theoretical works by writers such as Jameson, but are also evident in fiction by authors, such as Rushdie, who foreground the representing of spaces.

The fictional texts which are used in this thesis have been selected for their foregrounding of representation and space in two major theoretical areas: the postcolonial and the postmodern. The postcolonial is here understood in the sense suggested by Peter Hulme, in which 'it refers to a *process* of disengagement from the whole colonial syndrome, which takes many forms and is probably inescapable for all those whose worlds have been marked by that set of phenomena'.¹⁵ Hulme's definition does not homogenise, but allows an enormously diverse range of experiences to be understood as postcolonial. Each of the novelists analysed in my thesis documents postcolonial experience, ranging from the decolonisation of India, through the 'white settler' colonies of North America to the post-imperial situation of modern Europe and its multi-ethnic inhabitants. Although all of the novels are written in a period in which decolonisation has been realised for most former European colonies, many depict earlier, colonial times and imperial systems of organisation. Colonialism and imperialism are distinguished by Ania Loomba 'in spatial terms'. Loomba describes imperialism or neo-imperialism as 'the phenomenon that originates in the metropolis, the process which leads to domination and control'. She continues by stressing that 'its result, or what happens in the colonies as a consequence of imperial domination is colonialism or neo-colonialism'.¹⁶

Colonial, imperial and postcolonial environments demonstrate conflicting interpretations of space. A political struggle develops between colonisers and previous inhabitants of a colonised area which, as Edward Said suggests, is enacted through narrative as well as military struggle. Said writes:

The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future - these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative.

Such narratives exist in many forms, of which fiction is one example. Said also argues that 'stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world; they also become the method colonized people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history'.¹⁷ Narratives written after decolonisation has been put into effect demonstrate re-writings of dominant representations when they depict colonised spaces. Moreover, in representing new postcolonial environments, writers offer alternative understandings of space. As Salman Rushdie writes, 'it is clear that redescribing a world is the necessary first step towards changing it'.¹⁸ Postcolonial writing produces fictional maps which challenge dominant understandings of spaces produced by conflicting cultural and political relations.

Postmodern writing also highlights conflicting representations of spaces. Works of postmodern fiction are described in an influential account by Linda Hutcheon as those which 'contest art's right to claim to inscribe timeless universal values'. They do so, she argues, 'by thematizing and even formally enacting the context-dependent nature of all values. They also challenge narrative singularity and unity in the name of multiplicity and disparity'.¹⁹ This occurs as postmodern novels

challenge the accuracy of their own narratives through techniques such as metafictional, or self-conscious, storytelling, fragmented chronologies, and the blurring of boundaries between fact and fiction in reporting historical events. Postmodern narratives challenge dominant representations by demonstrating that spaces can be understood in differing, even conflicting ways.

Reading postcolonial/postmodern writing as fictional maps requires a methodology in which the spaces described by the narratives become the focal point of the analysis. Fredric Jameson describes his discussion of spatial systems in a film by Alfred Hitchcock as a story 'of the adventures of space' rather than of characters.²⁰ Similarly, my analysis concentrates on particular spaces evoked by each novelist. The postcolonial nation is the site of tensions between conflicting representations of space and is depicted accordingly. The nation is not understood as a space which can be defined essentially, but rather, as Benedict Anderson suggests, as 'an imagined political community,' on the grounds that 'the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'.²¹ Anderson describes how the modern nation developed through events in Europe and the Americas, yet, as Partha Chatterjee argues, 'if nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain "modular" forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine?'.²² My analysis explores how postcolonial nations are mapped in ways which explore new representations of spaces. Homi Bhabha writes, in the introduction to *Nation and Narration*, of:

a particular ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation, the language of those who write of it and the lives of those who live it. It is an ambivalence that emerges from a growing awareness that, despite the certainty with which historians speak of the “origins” of nation as a sign of the “modernity” of society, the cultural temporality of the nation inscribes a much more transitional social reality.²³

My thesis contends that the fictional maps produced by writers such as Rushdie, Ondaatje and Hollinghurst depict spaces of postcoloniality which reflect the ‘transitional social reality’ of both spaces and narratives.

Bhabha’s conception of an ambivalent and transitional idea of the nation can also be extended to other categories of spatial organisation, of which the city is one of the most prevalent in contemporary narratives. Like the postcolonial nation, the city appears as a site of conflicting representations of space. Ruth Fincher and Jane Jacobs, analysts of urban space, note that ‘social differences are gathered together in cities at unique scales and levels of intensity’.²⁴ Similarly, Salman Rushdie describes the city in his work as ‘the locus classicus of incompatible realities’.²⁵ His work, along with that of the other novelists discussed, posits the city as a locus for the tensions of social relations. Narrative depictions of city spaces are analysed as fictional maps which take such tensions into account.

The opening chapter of this thesis considers the theoretical background to discussions of space, representation and mapping in order to establish a framework for mapping strategies. The chapter begins with an exploration of the work of Henri Lefebvre, with reference to his arguments on the production of space. The main points raised in the analysis of Lefebvre are then developed through readings of Michel Foucault’s spatializing of power and selected postcolonial theorists’ politics of representation. This section highlights the politicised nature of spatial

representations and of attempts to resist dominant understandings of space. The second half of this chapter focuses on the work of one theorist, Fredric Jameson, who advocates a cartographic response to postmodern spatial concerns. Jameson's cognitive mapping provides a highly resonant case study, illustrating both the potential and the problems of mapping strategies. On the basis of the theoretical works discussed, the chapter proposes a conception of mapping strategies which involves the highlighting of the social production of spaces, challenges to dominant representations of space and attempts to produce new mappings which offer alternatives.

The remaining chapters analyse the deployment of similar mapping strategies in fictional works. Chapter Two focuses on the fiction of Salman Rushdie and the spaces of the Indian subcontinent which his work represents. The opening section focuses on postcolonial spaces in both Rushdie's fiction and critical responses to his work. The second part of the chapter concentrates on Rushdie's portrayal of contemporary Bombay as a site of multiple identities and that which would oppress them. Rushdie's highly politicised work establishes these spaces as sites of conflict and challenges dominant understandings of spatial and social relations. His metafictional narratives continually investigate the potential and problems of new forms of fictional mapping.

Chapter Three focuses on the fiction of Michael Ondaatje. Three novels are analysed in order to establish that Ondaatje deploys mapping strategies. His novels offer alternative histories of both people and places largely ignored in conventional historical discourse. The national and city spaces he depicts are shown to challenge dominant representations of spaces and provide alternative mappings. Analysis of the

novels also highlights the political significance of fictional mapping. I contrast an earlier novel with his later, more overtly political writing in order to demonstrate the connection between increased political commitment and the use of mapping strategies. Ondaatje's novels focus on the production of spaces and on the consequences of his own textual mapping.

The novels of Alan Hollinghurst provide the textual basis of Chapter Four. In the first section, mapping strategies are identified in Hollinghurst's novels which challenge colonial mapping of spaces. Depictions of contemporary spatial and social relations demonstrate the continuing influence of (post)colonial relations on the spaces of the current global system. Above all, Hollinghurst's work explores the complexity of the social and power relations which produce spaces. An analysis of his portrayal of male homosexuality in the city environment concludes by demonstrating the need for a complex mapping strategy in order to allow for representation of multiple subject positions.

These novelists have been selected on account of the foregrounding of both spatial relations and representational strategies in their work. As Tom Conley suggests: 'Writings can be called "cartographic" insofar as tensions of space and figuration inhere in fields of printed discourse.'²⁶ Tensions of space occur as the novels focus on conflicting representations of sites, while tensions of figuration are evident as they question their own representational medium of narrative. Fictional maps are produced in which dominant spaces are identified and challenged, while new mappings are explored. My thesis theorises space, representation and mapping in order to explore the development of new spatial understandings in literature.

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- ¹ Salman Rushdie with Una Chaudhuri, 'Imaginative Maps: Excerpts from a Conversation with Salman Rushdie', http://www.trill-home.com/rushdie/uc_maps.html.
- ² Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 26.
- ³ Aritha van Herk, 'Mapping as Metaphor', *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Kanada-Studien*, 2 (1982), 75-86 (p. 77).
- ⁴ See, for example, Michael R. Curry, *The Work in the World: Geographical Practice and the Written Word* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Mark Monmonier, *How to Lie with Maps* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991) and Denis Wood with John Fels, *The Power of Maps* (London: Routledge, 1993).
- ⁵ Chandra Mukerji, 'Visual Language', *Visual Communication*, 10 (1984), 30-44 (p. 31).
- ⁶ J. B. Harley, 'Maps, Knowledge and Power', in *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments*, ed. by Denis Cosgrove and Steven Daniels (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 277-312 (p. 283).
- ⁷ Harley, pp. 277-312 (p. 285).
- ⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi (London: Althone Press, 1988), p. 12.
- ⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. and ed. by Seán Hand (London: Althone Press, 1988). Deleuze is referring in particular to Foucault's work in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1991).
- ¹⁰ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. by Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 1-2.
- ¹¹ Fredric Jameson, 'Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', *New Left Review*, 146 (1984), 53-92.
- ¹² Bruno Bosteels, 'A Misreading of Maps: The Politics of Cartography in Marxism and Poststructuralism', in *Signs of Change: Premodern→Modern→Postmodern*, ed. by Stephen Barker (Albany: State University of New York, 1996), pp. 109-38 (p. 111).
- ¹³ Claire Colebrook, *Ethics and Representation: From Kant to Post-Structuralism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), p. 2.
- ¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, 'The Theater of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation', in *Writing and Difference*, ed. and trans. by Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1978), pp. 232-50 (p. 250).
- ¹⁵ Peter Hulme, 'Including America', *Ariel*, 26 (1995), 117-23 (p. 120).
- ¹⁶ Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 6-7.
- ¹⁷ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. xiii.
- ¹⁸ Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Granta, 1992), pp. 13-14.
- ¹⁹ Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 90.
- ²⁰ Fredric Jameson, 'Spatial Systems in *North by Northwest*', in *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)*, ed. by Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 47-72 (p. 51).
- ²¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (London: Verso, 1991), p. 6.
- ²² Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 5.
- ²³ Homi Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 1.
- ²⁴ Ruth Fincher and Jane M. Jacobs, 'Introduction', in *Cities of Difference*, ed. by Ruth Fincher and Jane M. Jacobs (New York: The Guilford Press, 1998), pp. 1-25 (p. 1).
- ²⁵ Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (Dover, Delaware: The Consortium, 1988), p. 314. Rushdie highlights the importance of this statement for his own life and work in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Granta, 1992), p. 409.
- ²⁶ Tom Conley, *The Self-Made Map: Cartographic Writing in Early Modern France* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p. 3.

Chapter One: Space, Representation and Mapping

I shall show how space serves, and how hegemony makes use of it, in the establishment, on the basis of an underlying logic and with the help of knowledge and technical expertise, of a 'system'. (Henri Lefebvre)¹

In order to analyse strategies of mapping, it is first necessary to establish a concept of space which is to be mapped. This chapter focuses on the theoretical background which posits mapping strategies as politicised representations of space. The chapter argues that particular knowledges and discourses of space become dominant in a given society, resulting in representations of space which are accordingly promoted or excluded. Dominant representations of spaces are challenged and resistant interpretations of space created through theoretical maps. A well-known example of theoretical mapping is considered, in order to assess the possibilities and problems afforded by mapping strategies.

The chapter begins with an analysis of a thinker whose work has been instrumental in the development of contemporary spatial thinking: Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre's writing is extremely relevant to the study of mapping as it focuses on the political significance of representations of space. His reflections on the relationship between space and social relations, the particular nature of contemporary spatiality and the possibility of resisting a dominant system of spatial understanding are all analysed in order to assert the central issues of current discussions of space. Lefebvre's work is of continuing relevance in highlighting both the insights and pitfalls of such discussions.

The issues raised by Lefebvre are then developed through readings of three other theorists, beginning with the work of Michel Foucault on power and resistance. Foucault's writing is concerned with the impact of power relations on the individual body, which he argues is both created and controlled in the physical environment. His argument that dominant discourses are established which promote particular types of knowledge and power relations is useful in assessing the impact of representations on the environment. Foucault's theories offer the critic a more complex model of power relations through which modes of resistance to dominant conceptions of space can be investigated. Edward Said's development of Foucault's concepts illustrates the intersection of poststructuralist with postcolonial concerns. Postcolonial theory takes up the concerns of space, representation and resistance in application to the lived experience of particular spaces of conflict in the colonial or postcolonial environment. Said's work foregrounds the particular issues associated with representation and postcolonial spaces, while Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak explicitly engages with the role of the critic in the postcolonial context. Analysing the work of these theorists in relation to the representation of space provides a background against which mapping strategies can be proposed.

One of the critics who has proposed mapping as a possible solution to the problems of space, representation and resistance is Fredric Jameson. Jameson's theorising of postmodernism leads him to adopt a principle of cognitive mapping and the second half of this chapter investigates his work as a case study of the possible strengths and weaknesses of theoretical mapping strategies. Bruno Bosteels suggests that 'whether this type of map, in keeping with the aims of geophilosophy, is capable of avoiding the representational pitfalls lurking in the philosophy and political theory

of the modern subject is of course precisely what remains to be seen'.² Addressing this concern is the overall aim of Chapter One.

Spaces and Representation: Henri Lefebvre

The work of the philosopher Henri Lefebvre attempts to theorise the relationship between society and space. Recent years have seen an increasing interest in Lefebvre, whose seminal work on space has become highly relevant to contemporary cultural concerns. Despite his long and varied intellectual career, it is his 1974 work *The Production of Space* which remains best known in the English-speaking academy and it is on this text that I concentrate. My analysis uses *The Production of Space* as a starting point from which to highlight the issues and problems central to Lefebvre's project and which have become so influential in contemporary critical thinking on space.

The Production of Space is Lefebvre's attempt to establish what he terms a 'unitary theory' of space which is capable of thinking physical, mental and social fields (p. 11). This unitary theory is not established in order to efface difference between the fields but to establish their interrelationship. His aim is to further understanding of the ways in which dominant systems establish knowledges of space and to explore ways in which these might be challenged. Lefebvre accepts the close relationship between mental categories of space and the 'real' space of social practice: the two are not the same but, 'each of these two kinds of space involves, underpins and presupposes the other' (p. 14). On this basis, he argues that space is not a neutral entity on which social relations occur, but that space is actively formed by the interrelationship of social and physical fields.

The aim of Lefebvre's work is to deny that space is neutral in order to insist upon the political nature of knowledges of space. This occurs on the basis that spaces are produced through their interaction with social relations as groups of people both respond to and adapt environments: '*(Social) space is a (social) product*' (p. 26). Certainly the behaviour of individuals in particular spaces is determined in response to natural phenomena, through climate and food supplies or through the separation of fertile and barren land, or even dangerous spaces such as volcanoes or earthquake zones. Increasingly, however, behaviour is ascribed according to human application of traits to certain spaces; spaces are deemed appropriate for domestic, productive or spiritual use and are prescribed as suitable or unsuitable for particular groups: men or women, the young or the old, differing ethnic or class groups. Individuals may be privileged in their mobility between spaces, or excluded from a number of sites. It is this principle of mutually constitutive space and social relations that my thesis assumes in order to investigate dominant and resistant representations of spaces in both theoretical and fictional maps.

Lefebvre contends that 'every society – and hence every mode of production with its subvariants [...] produces a space, its own space' (p. 31). Each type of state, 'introduces its own particular way of partitioning space, its own particular administrative classification of discourses about space and about things and people in space' (p. 281). He argues that these particular discourses arise from the specific conditions of production that develop within a space. Inevitably, such representations of space are political:

Each such form commands space, as it were, to serve its purposes; and the fact that space should thus become classificatory makes it possible for

a certain type of non-critical thought simply to register the resultant “reality” and accept it at face value. (p. 281)

The interests of dominant groups in a particular state system are therefore assumed to be those of the society as a whole, with spaces organised and regulated accordingly. This view is naturalised or given the appearance of neutrality.

Lefebvre posits that capitalism, with its removal of direct links between production and reproduction or survival, gives rise to an abstract conception of space, characterised by planning, maps and urban lifestyles. This ‘abstract space’ is maintained through the ‘double illusion’ of transparency and opacity, in which what is promoted as known about space is not subject to variation or hidden aspects which would suggest alternative conceptions of space (pp. 27-8). Abstract space ‘depends on consensus more than any space before it’, yet Lefebvre is clearly opposed to the dominance of any one conception of spatial representations:

It hardly seems necessary to add that within this space violence does not always remain latent or hidden. One of its contradictions is that between the appearance of security and the constant threat, and indeed the occasional eruption, of violence. (p. 57)

Contradictory conceptions and uses of spaces continue to appear, however, despite the attempts of dominant conceptions of space to suppress them. These can be witnessed in acts of resistance against officially designated spaces by groups denied access or prohibited from enacting certain types of behaviour in a designated area. Lefebvre argues, ‘spatial contradictions “express” conflicts between socio-political interests and forces; it is only *in* space that such conflicts come effectively into play, and in so doing they become contradictions *of* space’ (p. 365). He maintains that alternative conceptions of space are enacted in class struggles, and that ‘it is that

struggle alone which prevents abstract space from taking over the whole planet and papering over all differences' (p. 55).

Lefebvre therefore suggests that the contradictory nature of abstract space carries within it the seeds of a new 'differential space', which celebrates difference without attempting to establish one representation of space at the expense of others. However, he remains vague as to the exact nature of these struggles (p. 52). He argues that a 'revolutionary "project"' must 'make the reappropriation of the body, in association with the reappropriation of space, into a non-negotiable part of its agenda' (p. 166-7). More concrete suggestions as to the future of such a revolutionary project appear in his invocation of what he terms 'representational spaces' which are lived in a manner not consistent with the dominant ideology of space; in our society these might take the form of pavement dwelling, or the occupation of buildings in protest. These contradictory spaces are both suppressed by and resistant to the modern capitalist state.

An important point to note relates to Lefebvre's use of terminology. Lefebvre distinguishes separate categories through which spaces are understood, somewhat confusingly termed 'representations of space' and 'representational spaces'. The former refers to the spaces of scientists, planners, and so on and is 'the dominant space in any society' (p. 39). The latter, meanwhile, refers to dominated spaces, 'embodying complex symbolisms' and oppositional through their link 'to the clandestine or underground side of social life' (p. 33). While acknowledging the central role this distinction plays in Lefebvre's argument, my thesis does not employ this terminology, finding it more useful to consider all representations of space as participating in a complex network of power relations. Consequently, the term

representations of space is used to refer to understandings of space associated with *both* dominance and resistance, unless Lefebvre's definition of the term is indicated specifically.

Lefebvre's work highlights both the potential and the pitfalls of attempts to rethink space. One major problem is his insistence on providing a detailed history of spatial forms in relation to changes in modes of production. His reliance on historical delineations of space are at once insufficiently supported by data from the eras he characterises and compromised by a tendency to posit homogenous and absolute theories of space throughout history. Rob Shields argues that Lefebvre's historicising works against his stated dialectical method in that it 'suggests that time is the ultimate ordering system of space, and directs attention away from struggles in everyday life to grand themes in the economic and political structure of a time'.³ Two problems which remain highly relevant to the theorising of space can be identified in Lefebvre's stance and a critique such as Shields'. Firstly, Lefebvre's teleological focus highlights a continuing problem in theorising the relationship of space and time. Successive theorists have tended to privilege one at the expense of the other, a position which Doreen Massey challenges. She writes:

One way of thinking about all this is to say that the spatial is integral to the production of history, and thus to the possibility of politics, just as the temporal is to geography. Another way is to insist on the inseparability of time and space, on their joint constitution through the interrelations between phenomena; on the necessity of thinking in terms of space-time.⁴

Lefebvre is of course keen to reinstate the spatial as both an object of study and a means of furthering resistance. However, his eagerness to provide a teleological reading in which a particular form of spatial understanding is inevitable reduces the

spatial to a mere symptom of historical progress. This issue continues to pose problems for later theorists of space, particularly those, such as Fredric Jameson, concerned with Marxist analysis.

A second problem with Lefebvre's conception of the development of the spatial, again one which continues to resurface in works by later thinkers, is a relative weakness in representing present and past instances of resistance as opposed to a convincing portrayal of dominant strengths. Lefebvre's tendency to locate resistance in the appropriation of that which is designated as 'other' by the dominant system leads to his actually reiterating the type of oppressive classifications he aims to oppose. He calls for a struggle to 'rehabilitate underground, lateral, labyrinthine – even uterine or feminine – realities' and bring about an 'uprising of the body, in short, against the signs of non-body' (*The Production of Space*, p. 201). Associating the body with the feminine is clearly problematic within a society which continues to retain patriarchal modes of classifying women as determined by the physical. Virginia Blum and Heidi Nast argue that Lefebvre's model of resistance is predicated on a heterosexual basis which situates the feminine as a marginal and passive 'other'. Accordingly, 'his description of the feminine as primarily that which is abjected makes it difficult to grasp how he might ever theorize women's agency'.⁵

However, despite these undeniable problems, Lefebvre's work has retained the potential for later theorists to develop his insights within a more workable practice. As Shields writes:

This patriarchal ideology undermines his proposals for empowerment and dis-alienation and leaves the inheritors of these goals an essential task: the recasting of his theoretical frameworks in ways that open up his legacy and these important projects to non-European, non-male, non-white actors and agents.⁶

Despite his own marginalising of race, gender and other non-class based concerns, Lefebvre's insistence on the spatial conflict of different groups in society is useful for a more complex reading of space and power. In articulating the mutually constitutive relationship between space and social relations Lefebvre effectively problematises the neutralising of the assumptions on which contemporary capitalist society is based. The problematic assumptions which underlie his own conception of resistance simply reinforces the extent to which new definitions of space must negotiate their way through the continuing influence of dominant modes of representation.

Lefebvre's work provides a basis from which to establish an understanding of spatial relations, and from which subsequent theories of mapping can be developed. The following sections each outline developments of major areas that have been identified in Lefebvre's argument. Foucault shares Lefebvre's concern with alternative spatialisations, and his work is particularly useful through his discussion of resistance. Foucault's formulation of resistance provides a useful summary of the particular insights and problems applicable to the challenging of dominant power relations in the context of poststructuralism. While Lefebvre does not focus on the colonial social systems and postcoloniality on the production of capitalist spaces, the work of Said and Spivak considers this problematic. These critics explore the ways in which such spaces are produced and the manner and extent to which resistance can be effected.

Spaces and Power: Michel Foucault

Deleuze describes Michel Foucault as ‘a new cartographer’ on the grounds that his exploration of power and resistance produces maps of social and spatial relations. Foucault’s work tends not to refer specifically to mapping, yet it aims to interrogate the organisational systems of space and society in a manner equivalent to Lefebvre’s analysis of space and Jameson’s project of mapping. Despite their differences, it is useful to read Foucault’s concept of power in conjunction with Lefebvre’s insistence on the production of space. For Foucault, the relationship between space and power is based on his assumption that power is productive: that it produces individuals and their organisation in the physical environment. Most importantly, both Foucault’s theories and critical responses to his work demonstrate the complexity of any attempt to challenge dominant power relations and map sites of resistance.

It is necessary to begin with an outline of Foucault’s views on power relations, in order to explore the potential for resistance that he establishes. Foucault’s best-known discussions of power and resistance appear in *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality Volume One*. For Foucault, power is not simply a reactive force: ‘power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production’.⁷ In this way, both the physical organisation of spaces and the knowledges which delimit the environment and allow us to understand the category of the individual exist in an interplay with relations of power. Power and knowledge are not identical: Foucault is careful to stress that it is their relationship which he takes as an object of discussion.⁸ The relationship he identifies between power and knowledge is best described by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who writes:

if the lines of making sense of something are laid down in a certain way, then you are able to do only those things with that something which are possible within and by the arrangement of those lines. *Pouvoir-savoir* – being able to do something – only as you are able to make sense of it.⁹

Foucault is clear that his conception of power is neither static nor located in particular structures. He writes of the ‘omnipresence of power: not because it has the privilege of consolidating everything under its invincible unity, but because it is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another’.¹⁰ This conception of power is therefore highly significant for spatial relations, in that it is not located in particular sites, but is produced through the changeable relationships between sites.

A central feature of Foucault’s argument is his insistence that power relations also produce resistances: ‘where there is power, there is resistance’. He continues:

there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested, or sacrificial; by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations.¹¹

Resistance is inevitable but is plural, unpredictable and difficult to control. This view of resistance is extremely useful in its refusal to offer a simple alternative which will then become a dominant in turn and be subject to the same degree of resistance. However, as a consequence of this argument, while Foucault is clearly opposed to the dominant system of disciplinary power, he is unable to offer concrete suggestions, or indeed any way of reliably identifying and differentiating resistances.

However, his earlier reflections on spatial organisation can be used to identify both the insights and the problems raised by any attempt to represent resistance.

Despite their differing concerns, there are many areas of convergence between Foucault's work and Lefebvre's. Foucault's concept of power-knowledge insists that the privileging of particular knowledges creates a certain kind of relationship between social groups, just as Lefebvre describes the development of dominant discourses of space. The spaces which Foucault analyses, such as hospitals and prisons, are sites of conflicting knowledges and complex power relations. There are also similarities in their attempts to provide resistant conceptions of space. In 'Of Other Spaces', Foucault describes the concept of the heterotopia, which offers an alternative space within a given society. He writes:

there are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places – places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society – which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted.¹²

While utopian spaces remain mythical, these heterotopias are spaces which exist within the dominant system of power relations yet hold an ambivalent relationship to this system. Foucault offers the examples of prisons and psychiatric hospitals, both of which he studies elsewhere in his writing. These can easily be read in accordance with Lefebvre's 'representational spaces' of resistance.

However, like Lefebvre, Foucault does not offer a comprehensive guide to the use and value of these sites of resistance. Indeed, his argument that power is omnipresent is not consistent with any locating of resistance in a particular site. Perhaps more in line with the concept of power he developed in the 1970s are his

comments from a conversation with Gilles Deleuze in which Foucault suggests that 'each struggle develops around a particular source of power'. He argues:

To speak on this subject, to force the institutionalized networks of information to listen, to produce names, to point the finger of accusation, to find targets, is the first step in the reversal of power and the initiation of new struggles against existing forms of power.¹³

He offers the examples of prison inmates or doctors' discourse as a 'form of struggle', on the basis that present discourses on prisons exclude these voices. Consequently, it is not the site itself but the heterogenous nature of the knowledges that can be represented that is significant. From this argument it appears that Foucault supports the discourse of those previously marginalised, which offers new representations and forms of knowledge, as a means of resistance. However, elsewhere he worries:

Is it not perhaps the case that these fragments of genealogies are no sooner brought to light, that the particular elements of the knowledge that one seeks to disinter are no sooner accredited and put into circulation, than they run the risk of re-codification, re-colonisation?¹⁴

Foucault therefore returns to the central problem encountered by all attempts to articulate alternative knowledges in a system which remains unable to escape the dominant construction of knowledge. In theorising heterotopias, or spaces of resistance, Foucault is unable to map resistant spaces without returning to this problem of representation. At times, his work suggests that narratives can map resistant spaces, yet he also intimates that such a process may continually be compromised.

Jean Baudrillard's reading of *The History of Sexuality* even suggests that Foucault's own discourse is counter-productive in this respect. Baudrillard argues that Foucault's work 'invests and saturates, the entire space it opens'. He continues:

The smallest qualifiers find their way into the slightest interstices of meaning; clauses and chapters wind into spirals; a magisterial art of decentering allows the opening of new spaces (spaces of power and of discourse) which are immediately covered up by the meticulous outpouring of Foucault's writing.

As a result, 'Foucault's discourse is a mirror of the powers it describes'.¹⁵ Baudrillard's critique is useful in highlighting that while Foucault's work creates new conceptions of space, it also asserts a dominant representation of that space which is extremely difficult to challenge. However, Baudrillard overlooks the continuing presence of the possibility of resistance, even within Foucault's most seemingly pessimistic visions. Even as he writes of a body which is 'totally imprinted by history', Foucault adds, 'it is broken down by the rhythms of work, rest and holidays; it is poisoned by food or values, through eating habits or moral laws; *it constructs resistances* [my italics]'.¹⁶ The final phrase illustrates the unpredictability, but also the continuing force of resistances and the tension that will inevitably result from the interaction of resistance and power relations. Baudrillard is justified in arguing that this writing is a mirror of the powers it describes to the extent that Foucault refuses to offer an alternative programme of resistances. However, he overlooks the openings of resistances which continue to appear in Foucault's writing despite his insistence on the omnipotence of power, and it is these openings which have made his work a continuing source of interest for oppositional thinkers such as feminists and postcolonial theorists.

Ultimately, Foucault's work on spaces of power and resistance is a great deal more suggestive than it is prescriptive. It is certainly easy to vindicate Edward Said's belief in 'the paradox that Foucault's imagination of power was by his analysis of power to reveal its injustice and cruelty, but by his theorization to let it go on more or less unchecked'.¹⁷ Foucault consistently refuses to offer an alternative system, as 'to imagine another system is to extend our participation in the present system'.¹⁸ His theoretical work therefore offers critique rather than alternatives. However, it remains propitious to follow Foucault's thinking in order to utilise its insights for new directions, much as Said has done in his own work on postcolonial studies. The same principle can be adopted in relation to Foucault's heterotopias: Benjamin Genocchio sensibly suggests that it is more useful to consider them in terms of a theory rather than attempting to evaluate particular sites, as the heterotopia is 'more of an idea about space than any actual place'.¹⁹ Such a concept of space can be used to push at the boundaries of what is thought and, without claiming to escape the confines of the dominant knowledge of space, can modify gradually the possibilities of spatial representation.

This appears to be the conclusion of much of Foucault's own work after abandoning the attempt to speak for unreason in *Madness and Civilization*. This position is famously criticised by Derrida, who argues that unreason cannot be spoken through the systems of reason in his review of this work.²⁰ Foucault's later position is that:

a critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices that we accept rest.²¹

For analyses of space, this approach involves pointing out the assumptions on which spatial organisation is based, in order to establish that the social relations which produce spaces can be challenged and altered.

However, Foucault's work also raises questions over the potential for resistance of alternative strategies such as mapping. Although he never makes this explicit, such assumptions are of course a feature of his own writing. Nancy Fraser asks, in her critique of Foucault's apparently anti-humanist stance, 'whence, then, does Foucault's work, his description of "the carceral society," for example, derive *its* critical force?'.²² Indeed, it is difficult to conceptualise how Foucault can advocate resistance against a dominant system without some recourse to the humanist values of rights, freedom and the individual. Mapping, as a potential strategy of resistance, is also subject to the problem of legitimisation. Yet, in questioning dominant systems of knowledge, however implicated in these very systems our questions might be, a chance remains to push at the boundaries of what can be thought or known. In his analysis of Kantian knowledge, 'What is Enlightenment?', Foucault writes, 'the point, in brief, is to transcend the critique conducted in the form of necessary limitation into a practical critique that takes the form of a possible transgression'.²³ This type of critique can be incorporated in mapping strategies which continue to posit alternative relations between spaces and society.

Deleuze suggests that in Foucault's work:

from one diagram to the next, new maps are drawn. Thus there is no diagram that does not also include, besides the points which it connects up, certain relatively free or unbound points, points of creativity, change and resistance, and it is perhaps with these that we ought to begin in order to understand the whole picture.²⁴

Deleuze therefore reads Foucault as an initial exploration of new ways of representing spatial relations, which is as concerned with offering the potential for resistant spaces to be conceptualised as it is with representing them. It is fitting, then, that much of the work which has arisen from Foucault's thinking has proceeded from the 'relatively free or unbound' points which are never developed in his own writing. For example, Chris Philo notes that Foucault 'does not show the concern for the association of particular phenomena with particular material places, environments, and landscapes that might be expected given his theoretical stress on the importance of empirical details and differences'.²⁵ Colonial discourse analysis, however, has taken many of Foucault's insights and developed them to examine the intersection of discourse and power in particular sites of colonial and postcolonial tension. Foremost among practitioners of this work is Edward Said.

Representation and Resistance: Postcolonial Spaces

To the extent that modern history in the West exemplifies for Foucault the confinement and elision of marginal, oppositional and eccentric groups, there is, I believe, a salutary virtue in testimonials by members of those groups asserting their right of self-representation within the total economy of discourse.²⁶

Since the publication of *Orientalism* in 1978, Edward Said has been at the forefront of theorists concerned with imperialism and its aftermath and the necessity of drawing these issues into the mainstream of cultural and literary theory. Said employs a concept of discourse described by Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Foucault writes, 'a discursive structure can be detected because of the

systematicity of the ideas, opinions, concepts, ways of thinking and behaving which are formed within a particular context, and because of the effects of those ways of thinking and behaving'.²⁷ Said uses Foucault's concept in order to analyse the role of Western representations of 'the East', particularly the Islamic world. He writes, 'without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period'.²⁸ Said investigates the social production of space in specifically colonial and postcolonial contexts.

Said's project retains problematic features which will be examined in more detail hereafter. However, the debate engendered by Said's work is illustrative of the contested and heterogeneous nature of the works grouped together as postcolonial theory. It also highlights the tensions that exist between postcolonial thinking and the poststructuralist theories with which many such thinkers engage. Of course, this is not to suggest that postcolonial studies are somehow simply a branch of poststructuralism, or that the work of Western thinkers such as Foucault is in any sense foundational to studies of the enacting and consequences of Western imperialism. However, within the field of postcolonial literary studies in particular, poststructuralist concepts have proved to be useful points of discussion for theorists. On this basis, these theorists and others have investigated the problematics of representation in the postcolonial context.

Postcolonial theorists take as the basis of their analysis the displacement that the colonial subject undergoes as a result of the imposition of an alien regime.

Angelika Bammer writes:

The separation of people from their native culture either through physical dislocation (as refugees, immigrants, migrants, exiles, or expatriates) or the colonizing imposition of a foreign culture – what I am calling here displacement – is one of the most formative experiences of our century.²⁹

Thus the problem of colonial experience is one which has consequences for both the physical and the psychic lives of colonised subjects. Many people remain in the condition of physical dislocation Bammer describes, while others are subject to the revised social and cultural factors which continue to exist within a decolonised state, including the possible imposition of a Westernised educational system or a European language as a predominant influence. In addition, postcolonial theorists suggest that the formation of a truly postcolonial subject position is problematised by the legacy of the construction of the colonised as ‘Other’ to the subject of Western civilisation.

This construction is the starting point for Said’s analysis of colonial discourse. He explains that the Orient is one of Europe’s ‘deepest and most recurring images of the Other’, adding, ‘the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience’.³⁰ Both *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* demonstrate how the knowledge that allowed European powers to justify their treatment of colonised peoples is foundational to canonical texts of Western culture. This focus on textual representations has elicited much criticism from other critics working in the field of colonial and postcolonial studies.³¹ However, within the context of literary studies, much of this difficulty can be alleviated through the recognition that to posit an opposition between the politically

motivated analysis of texts and political action in other fields is an unnecessary binary. It is important to note that the literary carries no overdetermining role in colonialist practice, but is simply one among many possible fields which can be utilised. If it is impossible to argue that certain representations determine all aspects of power relations, it is perhaps also unnecessary. In highlighting the extent to which Western cultural assumptions have been based on the principles of imperialism and colonialism, the work of Said and other exponents of colonial discourse analysis add to the wider debate on practices of decolonisation.

Said's depiction of the relationship of discourse to the actual spaces of colonialism has also been criticised. He writes:

my whole point about this system is not that it is a misrepresentation of some Oriental essence – in which I do not for a moment believe – but that it operates as representations usually do, for a purpose, according to a tendency, in a specific historical, intellectual, and even economic setting.³²

While he acknowledges that the cultures of the East have 'a brute reality obviously greater than anything that could be said about them in the West', Said contends that colonialist writing can, nonetheless, '*create* not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe'.³³ Western constructions of the Orient do have a material effect due to the particular conditions of economic and political power relations between colonisers and colonised.

Robert Young identifies this link as a problem with Said's methodology, asking, 'How then can Said argue that the "Orient" is just a representation, if he also wants to claim that "Orientalism" provided the necessary knowledge for actual colonial conquest?'.³⁴ However, a reading of Said's argument which asserts the

relationship between constructions of knowledge and power in colonial societies as a process enacted between these two, always variable points allows us to recognise the constructed and contested nature of Orientalist discourse without downplaying its role in helping to shape material realities. In his introduction to *Culture and Imperialism*, for example, Said notes the repeated use of ideas such as the bringing of civilisation to barbaric peoples and the necessity of using violence to 'improve' them, which clearly bolster the use of physical force in colonised lands.³⁵ Lefebvre's conception of spaces as socially produced can be used to support Said's argument. In arguing that spaces are produced by social relations, Lefebvre emphasises that these relations differ, and may well be in conflict. Correspondingly, to claim that spaces are produced through colonial relations and that imperial representations of these spaces become dominant is not to suggest that they are the only possible options. Colonial relations involve a variety of heterogeneous social groups, both native and imperialist, while social relations from a pre-colonial era continue to be significant. It is the complex interaction of these social relations which produces sites. Moreover, the establishing of a dominant representation of space does not negate alternatives.

However, more problematic are the poststructuralist assumptions regarding representation on which Said's work is based. These can be summarised by Derrida's assertion that, 'because it has always already begun, representation therefore has no end'.³⁶ These deny the possibility of any one 'true' representation of the Orient, or anything else, arguing that all representations are subject to reinterpretation. Consequently, Said's view that Orientalist constructions provide a view of the Orient which is somehow inaccurate is compromised. As Aijiz Ahmad suggests, Said seems unable 'to make up his mind whether "Orientalist Discourse" is a system of

representations, in the Foucauldian sense, or of *mis*representations, in the sense of a realist problematic'.³⁷ I suggest that Said tends towards the Foucauldian sense and acknowledges the further problems this raises, stating his belief that 'any and all representations, because they *are* representations, are embedded first in the language and then in the culture, institutions, and political ambience of the representer'.³⁸ Clearly his own project cannot be exempted from this diagnosis and, despite his enormous contribution to the field of postcolonial studies, throughout his work Said never resolves this dilemma.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak also addresses this problem as she reaffirms the impossibility of expressing difference in her well-known article 'Can the Subaltern Speak?'. Although she acknowledges she cannot resolve this dilemma, her analysis is productive in raising new issues. Spivak's approach is notable for its heterogeneity, as she utilises the various arguments of feminism, deconstruction and Marxism in order to address the questions raised by postcolonialism, famously describing herself as 'a bricoleur', or one who uses the tools which come to hand.³⁹ Her approach is therefore extremely useful as an example to the critic who wishes to accept the heterogeneous nature of representational strategies such as mapping without eliding the tensions that such an approach raises.

'Can the Subaltern Speak?' begins with a critique of the positions of both Foucault and Deleuze which suggests that, 'Western intellectual production is, in many ways, complicit with Western international economic interests'.⁴⁰ She analyses a conversation between the two theorists, in which she problematises Foucault and Deleuze's locating of revolutionary political action in the 'concrete experience' of workers, prisoners, children and so on, which cannot be articulated by intellectuals.⁴¹

Spivak therefore enquires 'are those who act and *struggle* mute, as opposed to those who act and *speak*?'.⁴² While Spivak's assertions are undoubtedly useful as a reminder of the vigilance that is required in the production of theories of resistance, her analysis of Foucault's and Deleuze's positions is harsh. Foucault refuses to speak for others but does situate the intellectual in relation to the struggle. He states:

The intellectual's role is no longer to place himself 'somewhat ahead and to the side' in order to express the stifled truth of the collectivity; rather, it is to struggle against the forms of power that transform him into its object and instrument in the sphere of 'knowledge,' 'truth,' 'consciousness,' and 'discourse.'⁴³

The role of the critic, therefore, is to highlight the assumptions on which dominant knowledges are based. In this respect, Foucault's position is consistent with Spivak's own, which is concerned with establishing the basis on which marginalised voices can be understood when the dominant system cannot be denied.

Spivak validates attempts to uncover the consciousness of the subaltern, or marginalised individual, whilst acknowledging that the critic cannot speak for this consciousness. That Spivak is unable to fully distinguish her own position from the problems of representation that beset other theorists does not invalidate her analysis; rather it is her willingness to engage fully with the issues that theorists such as Foucault and Said have tended to elide which gives her work its critical strength. Spivak's analysis of documentation on *sati*, or widow-burning, in the nineteenth century causes her to construct the sentence 'white men are saving brown women from brown men' to articulate the position of the British authorities in their attempt to abolish the practice. Against this she posits the view of supporters of *sati* as, 'the women wanted to die'.⁴⁴ In each case, she notes, the voices of the women themselves

are silenced and it is impossible for the researcher to recover them, leading her to the conclusion that 'the subaltern cannot speak'.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, it is not sufficient, she argues, for the theorist to accept this only to reject any attempt to articulate the subaltern. In an essay evaluating the work of *Subaltern Studies*, a group of South Asian historians who work on the recovery of marginalised voices in history, Spivak highlights that this project entails a 'theoretical fiction to entitle the project of reading'. Nonetheless, she supports this as 'a *strategic* use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest'.⁴⁶ Spivak cannot solve the problem of legitimisation which denies the critic a privileged view; who, after all, is to validate this 'scrupulously visible political interest'? Instead, she advocates a policy which attempts to consider the voice of the subaltern in a manner which acknowledges the insufficiency of the attempt and the need for constant vigilance on the part of a critic who must continually situate his or her own position in order to acknowledge the complicity of the academic in reproducing knowledge.

Spivak's view that there can be no simple retrieval of subaltern consciousness on which to base a nativist alternative to the dominant system is, of course, contested.⁴⁷ However, the fiction discussed in this project demonstrates a similar view to Spivak's own. Spivak identifies the problem facing mapmaking in postcolonial fiction, arguing that the 'radical intellectual in the West is either caught in a deliberate choice of subalterneity, granting to the oppressed either that very expressive subjectivity which s/he criticizes or, instead, a total unrepresentability'.⁴⁸ Spivak concludes 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' with the comment, 'Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual as intellectual has a circumscribed task which she must not disown with a flourish'.⁴⁹ In this way she asserts her position that

the problems of representation must continually be engaged with by the politically committed critic.

Accepting that representation is continually in process allows theorists to challenge dominant ideas. However, the equally problematic question of legitimation also precludes the simple replacement of these ideas with alternatives, as these can, in turn, be challenged. My analysis of mapping strategies focuses on the two main aspects of revisionary studies of representation, the first of which is explicating the assumptions that underlay seemingly neutral representations and demonstrating the consequences of these for particular groups. In the field of literature, it is this process which allows us to provide a postcolonial reading of the colonial text, or a feminist interpretation of a depiction of women. However, the second aim of such criticism is yet more complex and raises issues which remain unresolved. The possibility is investigated of new means of representation, which attempt to do more than redress the unequal balance of power by transcending the system of power relations involved altogether. As my use of the term 'transcend' demonstrates, this process is highly problematic: how is it possible to go beyond a particular system of language, power relations and representation without recourse to that system itself?

Homi Bhabha asks a related question when he enquires:

How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable?⁵⁰

Bhabha's comment raises the question of legitimation in a complex global environment and it is my contention that this dilemma continues to appear

throughout strategies of mapping which attempt to establish alternative readings of society in space. My readings of Lefebvre, Foucault, Said and Spivak have established the concerns which a theory of mapping must consider. Both the insights and problems found in Lefebvre's work remain relevant to contemporary mapping strategies. The dangers of an overly teleological approach which relies too much on contemporary conceptions of past spaces is seen to be unproductive. While it is highly effective in asserting the politicisation of representations of space, Lefebvre's work also demonstrates more success in emphasising the strengths of the dominant than in strategies of resistance. Foucault's work considers broadly similar concerns to Lefebvre's, and provides a model of power relations which allows for a more complex theorising of resistance. However, the problems in enacting these resistant strategies remain. Said and Spivak are both concerned with the appropriation of resistant discourses and highlight the extent to which legitimisation continues to be a problem for theorists of space and representation. Each of these issues continues to surface in the mapping strategies of Fredric Jameson. Jameson advocates a new system of mapping in order to highlight the social forces which produce a dominant system of spatial organisation, yet such strategies must also address the issues of legitimisation raised by the continuing use of mapping as a representational medium.

Fredric Jameson

So I come finally to my principle point here, that this latest mutation in space – postmodern hyperspace – has finally succeeded in transcending the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organise its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world.⁵¹

This is someone who gets lost in large department stores.⁵²

Fredric Jameson's 'spatial turn' is among the most influential of recent critical reappraisals of space. Jameson's earlier work as a Marxist critic had already engaged with the crisis of representation posited by poststructuralism in his 1981 *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. This work was a dramatic attempt to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable and unite the insights of poststructuralist thought under the banner of a revitalised Marxism. However, it is with the publication of the essay 'Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism' in 1984 that Jameson's 'spatial turn' occurs. Jameson argues that we are living in a postmodern age, in which a new spatial configuration – 'postmodern hyperspace' – has led to a politically crippling inability of the individual to locate himself or herself in the world. This essay, along with 1988's 'Cognitive Mapping,' is revised and extended in his 1991 *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, which I take as a primary text. Jameson's subsequent work has attempted to utilise the slippery notion of 'cognitive mapping' that he proposes to counter the disorientating effects of postmodernism.

Jameson's work has received much critical attention in the years since its publication, with many critics remaining sceptical regarding the links he makes between space, mapping and politics. Paul Patton's comment that 'this is someone

who gets lost in large department stores' refers to Jameson's famous description of his own feelings of disorientation in the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles, which he presents as emblematic of the postmodern experience (*Postmodernism*, pp. 39-44). Patton finds Jameson's work useful, but uses this comment to summarise the reasons why many critics have found it 'tempting to ridicule this analysis'.⁵³ My analysis of Jameson's views on space and cognitive mapping investigate various critiques of his work in order to further interrogate the connections between space and mapping, domination and resistance.

This section explores Jameson's work, in particular his concept of cognitive mapping, in order to highlight the continuing difficulties that face the theorist employing mapping strategies in order to represent spaces. Jameson's evocation of 'postmodern hyperspace' demonstrates that his examination of space is a means to document the political problems he identifies in the spatial organisation of contemporary society. His insistence on the necessity of a new form of cognitive mapping is explored in order to establish exactly what such a strategy might involve, while the debate surrounding this concept is then discussed, emphasising the complexity and continuing ambiguity of such strategies. Jameson's attempts to apply his theories in aesthetic analysis are then discussed in order to evaluate both the potential and the pitfalls of mapping strategies.

Jameson's Postmodern Hyperspace

My analysis of Jameson's work begins by summarising the main points through which a conception of postmodern space is used to exemplify the political problems which necessitate a new system of mapping. As the title of his work suggests, what

Jameson terms 'postmodernism' is the dominant cultural form he associates with the age of 'late' capitalism, starting around the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century. This is the era of global multinationalism, in which 'not merely the older city but even the nation-state itself has ceased to play a central functional and formal role' in the capitalist process (*Postmodernism*, p. 412). The shift to a global system of capital from earlier forms of 'the national market and the older imperialist system' has led to a radically new form of spatial organisation to which individuals must respond (p. 50). However, Jameson finds that establishing a historical analysis of this space is problematic in 'an age which has forgotten how to think historically in the first place' (p. ix).

A consequence of this lack of historical thinking is a second crucial factor in Jameson's argument: his insistence that the postmodern age is characterised by a new focus on space. He writes, 'it is at least empirically arguable that our daily life, our psychic experience, our cultural languages, are today dominated by categories of space rather than by categories of time, as in the preceding period of high modernism' (p. 16). Most importantly, Jameson understands the dominance of space as a political problem, as space itself is compromised through its saturation by the dominant system of capitalism. Jameson explains this process thus:

I take such spatial peculiarities of postmodernism as symptoms and expressions of a new and historically original dilemma, one that involves our insertion as individual subjects into a multidimensional set of radically discontinuous realities, whose frames range from the still surviving spaces of bourgeois private life all the way to the unimaginable decentering of global capital itself. (p. 413)

Jameson's contention is that these 'radically discontinuous realities' occur in a new space in which 'the suppression of difference', and 'the relentless saturation of any

remaining voids and empty places,' result in a situation in which the postmodern body 'is now exposed to a perceptual barrage of immediacy where all sheltering layers and intervening mediations have been removed' (pp. 412-3). It is in this condition that the ability of the individual to locate himself or herself in a 'mappable external world' is compromised (p. 44).

The consequences of this situation for postmodern politics are found in the outmoding of 'critical distance', a term Jameson uses to describe the possibility of the cultural act which is outside capital and can, consequently, challenge capitalism.

He argues:

distance in general (including 'critical distance' in particular) has very precisely been abolished in the new space of postmodernism. We are submerged in its henceforth filled and suffused volumes to the point where our now postmodern bodies are bereft of spatial coordinates and practically (let alone theoretically) incapable of distancing. (pp. 48-9)

As such, acts of cultural resistance 'are all somehow secretly disarmed and reabsorbed by a system of which they themselves might well be considered a part, since they can achieve no distance from it' (p. 49). Jameson's conception of postmodern hyperspace clearly owes a lot to the work of Jean Baudrillard and his concept of hyperreality.⁵⁴ Baudrillard proposes that contemporary society is characterised by simulation, or, 'the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal'. In this society, he argues, 'it is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real'.⁵⁵ Baudrillard's position is that the distinction between representation and reality, or signs and the real, has broken down, leaving no possibility of political action that can reinstate this distinction. However, while Baudrillard's argument leads him to reject political commitment, Jameson reworks

the concept of postmodern hyperreality to explore the possibilities of overcoming this nihilistic response to the disorientation of the postmodern era. Jameson therefore calls for an entirely new way of representing the system, 'in which we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle which is at present neutralized by our spatial as well as our social confusion' (*Postmodernism*, p. 54). On this basis, he develops a principle of cognitive mapping.

Before analysing Jameson's cognitive mapping in greater detail, however, it is necessary to interrogate the basis of his theory in a new conception of postmodern hyperspace. Firstly, it is essential to address whether a specifically postmodern space can in fact be distinguished. Jameson is not alone in positing that there are certain traits applicable to late capitalist space. Although Lefebvre, writing in the early 1970s, does not refer to the postmodern era, his concept of abstract space also suggests that twentieth-century capitalism brings with it a form of spatial organisation which resists alternative versions and so establishes control.⁵⁶ Like Jameson, the geographer David Harvey is interested more specifically in differentiating developments in spatial organisation and defining them as postmodern. He describes points of time-space compression, or 'processes that so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves'.⁵⁷ Such time-space compression occurs when there is an increase in the pace of life, currently demonstrated through the increasingly short shelf-lives of fashions in culture, and an overcoming of spatial barriers, now happening through developing technologies in both transport and media. Harvey identifies the early 1970s as a crucial time of

economic change, yet despite their differences in periodization, there are clearly strong parallels between Harvey's concept and Jameson's 'barrage of immediacy'. Harvey also links these times of change with an 'omnipresent danger that our mental maps will not match current realities'.⁵⁸

However, just as the emphasis placed by Lefebvre on periodising systems of spatial organisation is subject to criticism, the later thinkers Harvey and Jameson have also been challenged on this basis. In his discussion of Jameson's original essay on postmodernism, Mike Davis notes that the economic periodisation that Jameson adopts from the work of Ernest Mandel, which dates late capitalism from the immediate post-war period, does not correspond to Jameson's own assigning of postmodern artworks from the 1960s onwards.⁵⁹ Jameson successfully answers this problem in the introduction to the revised version of the essay in the 1991 book, arguing that the cultural transformations required will inevitably be predated by economic changes (*Postmodernism*, p. xx). However, it is worth noting that this argument points towards the heterogeneous nature of postmodern phenomena and their various appearances in time and space. Moreover, despite his assertion that it is in the postmodern era *alone* that disorientation occurs and cognitive mapping is required, there is no evidence to support this claim. Many individuals throughout history have experienced spatial disorientation as a result of slavery or war, for example.

A further criticism of Jameson's vision of hyperspace can be levelled at his tendency to suggest a model of two categories of time and space wherein one is privileged at the expense of the other. His belief that the postmodern age is dominated by space, and that this, in turn leads to a disavowal of history and

therefore political challenges, is highly problematic. The predominance of space is famously referred to by Michel Foucault in a lecture originally delivered in 1967, in which he states that 'the present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space'.⁶⁰ However, this statement is best read in conjunction with Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift's contemporary warning: 'Foucault's celebrated announcement that the era of space was succeeding that of time needs to be taken with a pinch of salt'.⁶¹ Foucault continues by stressing that a focus on space cannot occur at the expense of time for the two are inextricably linked: 'space itself has a history in Western experience and it is not possible to disregard the fatal intersection of time with space'.⁶² His reflections on space throughout the rest of his career continue to be read very much within historical frameworks through his concern to establish genealogies of, for example, the prison, or sexuality. Crucially, Foucault's famous condemnation of the tendency to associate space with 'the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile' does not imply any denigration of historical thinking, but rather opens the way for the development of spatio-historical thinking.⁶³

Perhaps the most useful conception of the relationship between the spatial and the temporal is one which refuses to isolate the two as competing ways of thinking about the world. Doreen Massey analyses Jameson's separation of time from space and challenges his belief that the dominant of postmodern space is necessarily depoliticised. Her belief in 'space-time' insists that while the postmodern age certainly brings about a change in spatial relations, this does not rule out the 'possibility of politics' which may challenge the social conditions experienced through the spatial.⁶⁴ Jameson himself notes of his association of time with modernism and space with postmodernism, 'the distinction is between two forms of

interrelationship between time and space rather than between those two inseparable categories themselves' (*Postmodernism*, p. 154). On this basis it is possible to read Jameson's attempts to 'think the present historically in an age that has forgotten how to think historically in the first place', in conjunction with his call to 'raise spatial issues' as a 'fundamental organizing concern' (p. ix; p. 50).

A second major area of contention in Jameson's spatiality lies in his description of postmodern hyperspace. Central to his thesis is the evocation of the experience of visiting the Westin Bonaventure Hotel, which has subsequently given rise to much critical discussion. Consequently, an examination of both his description and his critics' responses outlines many of the problems associated with Jameson's spatialising. Jameson describes the building, designed by the architect John Portman, as aspiring to be 'a total space, a complete world, a kind of miniature city' (p. 40). He notes the difficulty he and other visitors experience in locating the entrances and exits, and the 'reflective glass skin', which ensures that 'when you seek to look at the hotel's outer walls you cannot see the hotel itself but only the distorted images of everything that surrounds it' (p. 42). Finally, he notes that 'it is quite impossible to get your bearings' in the lobby, to the extent that even potential customers are unable to find their way to any of the shops within the hotel (p. 43). It is this experience which he insists is typical of the disorientation experienced by the individual in postmodern hyperspace.

An initial quibble with Jameson's analysis is in his use of what is overwhelmingly agreed to be an example of late modern architecture to illustrate his point. However, as Derek Gregory argues, the use of this statement as a 'rod to beat Jameson' is unfair: much of Jameson's argument is based on the fact that in

documenting his experience in the Bonaventure he is 'evoking a postmodern response'.⁶⁵ However, a question remains as to whether the invoking of this personal response as a generalised assumption of the postmodern condition is appropriate. Paul Patton observes 'Jameson's analysis always seemed a somewhat overblown response to a novel architectural design'. Patton continues, 'Jameson's postmodern space is an imaginary space in the most banal sense of the term: a made-up image of reality, the invention of an overheated theoretical imagination'.⁶⁶ Yet, while Jameson's response is undoubtedly extreme, and presumably at least partly in the interests of rhetorical effect, the effects of postmodern hyperspace which he invokes remain significant. Jameson's point is not to 'make-up' an image of reality, but to highlight the difficulties of negotiating the imaginary and the real when the boundaries between the two seem increasingly blurred. Patton notes that Jameson and other theorists of postmodern space posit 'imaginary cities': 'complex objects which include both realities and their description: cities confused with the words used to describe them'.⁶⁷ As Lefebvre's work has shown, however, any useful analysis of space will have to accept the different levels at which the production of space operates, and the extent to which discourses shape the spaces they describe.

Nonetheless, in using his personal response to a familiar building as a guide to postmodern hyperspace in general, Jameson undoubtedly runs the risk of universalising his own experience to the detriment of the lived experience of other inhabitants of the city. Critics such as Mike Davis have noted that the Bonaventure is an example of a building designed for the use of 'the upper middle classes' which, for a large proportion of LA residents, 'might as well have been built on the third moon of Jupiter'.⁶⁸ Jameson's use of such an exclusive site raises a number of

difficulties, including his own failure to acknowledge its status. Davis suggests 'what is missing from Jameson's otherwise vivid description of the Bonaventure is the savagery of its insertion into the surround city'. Davis's argument is that Jameson has homogenised the landscape of Los Angeles, rather than focusing on the way in which it has been polarized into 'radically antagonistic spaces'.⁶⁹ Jameson's response to Davis is noted in *Postmodernism* with his reference to the role of the disguised entrances in separating the hotel from the city outside (p. 41). However, while he recognises that the hotel is designed as a 'minicity', he never makes explicit that the exclusive Bonaventure is clearly kept more separate from some of the city's inhabitants than others. As Sean Homer observes, the seemingly impenetrable nature of the facade 'has as much to do with keeping out the populace – the indigenous downtown Angelenos, the poor, the homeless, the blacks and the hispanics – as it has with evading modernist utopian aspirations'.⁷⁰ The problem is not simply that, as Brian Jarvis suggests, 'Jameson's views of landscape often seem to come from *within* the centres of luxury and affluence'.⁷¹ Rather, it is his own failure to acknowledge the situated nature of his response that weakens his attempts to universalise his experience into one representative of postmodern spatiality.

Jameson's assumptions regarding the capacity of his experience in the Bonaventure to represent a generalised phenomenon demonstrate a typical pitfall in any attempt to document an imagined experience of a real space. Accusations of elitism in the depiction of postmodern spatiality are not directed at Jameson alone; D. Matless, for example also charges Edward Soja and Henri Lefebvre with 'mapping out a general ontology from the particular'.⁷² Matless also observes a tendency among theorists such as Jameson, Soja and Davis to use Los Angeles as a privileged

site of postmodern spatiality in what Fincher and Jacobs wryly term 'blockbuster urban commentaries'.⁷³ However, recent discussions of postmodern spatiality have begun to move further afield in their analyses of very different urban centres. In an essay on Bombay as a postmodern city, Jim Masselos asks whether Los Angeles is an appropriate model, given the very different mix of high rise buildings and shanties found in Bombay (Mumbai) and, presumably, other non-Western cities.⁷⁴ Clearly, Jameson does not suggest that his analysis is the only possible response to the issues of postmodern spatiality, and nor does he state that LA is in any sense a privileged example. What is missing from his account, however, is an acknowledgement of the vastly heterogeneous nature of postmodern spatial experience or of the city in the developing world as an equally representative space of global capitalism.

Moreover, even within a particular postmodern environment, individual experience varies greatly. Doreen Massey remains dubious regarding the extent to which experiences such as Jameson's in the Bonaventure Hotel really reflect late twentieth century life for most people. She observes:

amid the Ridley Scott images of world cities, the writing about skyscraper fortresses, the Baudrillard visions of hyperspace ... most people actually still live in places like Harlesden or West Brom. Much of life for many people, even in the heart of the First World, still consists of waiting in a bus-shelter with your shopping for a bus that never comes. Hardly a graphic illustration of time-space compression.⁷⁵

Massey's criticism is two-fold: Jameson's tendency to generalise assumes an upper middle class Western lifestyle which is clearly not appropriate to the majority of postmodern citizens. Moreover, the association of such individuals' spatial confusion with a loss of political agency ignores the lack of agency experienced by other groups: 'Those who today worry about a sense of disorientation and a loss of control

must once have felt that they knew exactly where they were, and that they *had* control'.⁷⁶ The feelings of disorientation and powerlessness that Jameson experiences in postmodern hyperspace are nothing new for many who do not share his race, gender or class position.

The significance of each of these responses to Jameson's conception of postmodern spatiality lies in their capacity to remind the critic of the heterogeneous nature of experiences included in postmodern space. Such criticisms do not refute Jameson's assertions that experiences of disorientation are prevalent, but do require these concerns to be addressed whilst maintaining awareness of the dynamic nature of spatial relations. This is in keeping with Lefebvre's notion of a conflictual space produced by the struggles of various agents. Jameson's documenting of his experience in the Bonaventure Hotel is useful primarily as an attempt to represent a particular condition, rather than as a universalising statement.

Finally, however, it is important to recall the significance of the format through which Jameson presents his views. Victor Burgin argues that despite the apparent similarities between their evocations of Los Angeles sites, Soja's use of LA as 'a field of empirically observable data' differs from Jameson's use of the Bonaventure, which 'offers not empirical data but allegorical form, which does not directly "illustrate" the shape of *future* urban life, but which indirectly "figures" *present* power as lived by those submitted to it'.⁷⁷ Reading Jameson's critique of postmodern hyperspace as allegory allows us to understand it as an interpretation which is knowingly subject to reinterpretation, rather than as attempt to establish a definitive and uncontested statement on postmodern spatiality. Yet in establishing that his work is intended as political critique, he once again encounters the difficulties of

representation. In order to establish whether he can reconcile the problems of representation with his calls for a new form of political commitment it is necessary to explore his concept of cognitive mapping.

Cognitive Mapping

Jameson's response to the postmodern hyperspace he sees being produced by multinational capitalism is to call for a new form of cognitive mapping, 'in which we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle which is at present neutralized by our spatial as well as our social confusion' (*Postmodernism*, p. 54). The inspiration for the principle of cognitive mapping comes from Kevin Lynch's 1960 study, *The Image of the City*. Lynch analyses maps drawn by inhabitants of different areas in American cities and observes that the more economically disadvantaged the area in which the subject lives, the more partial and minimal the map. Jameson explains that his concept of cognitive mapping 'involves an extrapolation of Lynch's spatial analysis to the realm of social structure, that is to say, in our historical moment, to the totality of class relations on a global (or should I say multinational) scale' (p. 416). This occurs on the basis that:

the incapacity to map spatially is as crippling to political experience as the analogous incapacity to map spatially is for urban experience. It follows that an aesthetic of cognitive mapping in this sense is an integral part of any socialist political project. (p. 416)

Jameson therefore posits cognitive mapping as an essential component of resistance to the dominant system of multinational capitalism, as it allows the totality of the current system to be reconceptualised.

Mapping, for Jameson, remains a process of representation. He stresses:

The problem is still one of representation, and also of representability: we know that we are caught within these more complex global networks, because we palpably suffer the prolongations of corporate space everywhere in our daily lives. Yet we have no way of thinking about them, of modeling them, however abstractly, in our mind's eye. (p. 127)

In his discussion of cognitive mapping he continues the project, begun in *The Political Unconscious*, of incorporating the observations of poststructuralist thought within a revitalised Marxism. While he readily admits that cognitive mapping 'clearly raises the very central issues of representation as such', he denies that poststructuralist critiques can demolish such a model. Rather, he argues, 'The cognitive map is not exactly mimetic in that older sense; indeed, the theoretical issues it poses allow us to renew the analysis of representation on a higher and much more complex level' (*Postmodernism*, p. 51). Jameson links Lynch's conclusions to Louis Althusser's redefinition of ideology as 'the representation of the subject's *Imaginary* relationship to his or her *Real* conditions of existence' (p. 51). He contends that this is 'exactly' the purpose of cognitive mapping: 'to enable a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society's structures as a whole' (p. 51). Cognitive mapping is a process of mediation, through which the otherwise 'unrepresentable' totality can be understood. Jameson recognises the obvious problems inherent in a project to represent the unrepresentable, and in his

early discussion of cognitive mapping in the essay of the same name he admits ‘I have observed that I am, myself, absolutely incapable of guessing or imagining its form’.⁷⁸ In his conclusion to *Postmodernism* he reveals that cognitive mapping ‘was in reality nothing but a code word for “class consciousness”’ (p. 418).

Jameson’s cognitive mapping has been discussed widely by critics both sympathetic and unsympathetic towards his project. However, as much of this discussion centres on the question of cognitive mapping as an attempt to represent the totality, it is first necessary to explore the background to this aspect of Jameson’s theory and examine the concept in his earlier work. The concept of totality is a feature of a Western Marxist tradition which argues that the whole of the capitalist system must be envisaged in order to allow resistance to this system.⁷⁹ Jameson’s argument is that the experience of postmodern hyperspace is politically crippling as it leaves the individual unable to map the global relations which produce capitalist spaces. In order to represent and challenge these social and spatial relations, a cognitive map must be able to represent the totality of that experience.

Jameson’s insistence on the need for cognitive mapping to represent the totality of experience brings him into direct confrontation with poststructuralist critiques of totalizing theories. Martin Jay makes a plausible argument that ‘if one had to find one common denominator among the major figures normally included in the post-structuralist category [...] it would have to be their unremitting hostility towards totality’.⁸⁰ Jameson himself notes that ‘the rhetoric of totality and totalization that derived from what I have called the Germanic or Hegelian tradition is the object of a kind of instinctive or automatic denunciation by just about everybody’.⁸¹ Bruno Bosteels’ discussion of cartographic models notes the opposition centred on a

concept 'fiercely beleaguered by poststructuralists yet indispensable to marxists, namely, the representability of knowability of "totality" as the promise if not also the premise of any critical-utopian project'.⁸² This hostility to totality is based on the refuting of the premise that a knowledge can be invoked which is beyond representation and, therefore, its poststructuralist critique. Jameson's application of poststructuralist theories, including his acknowledgement of the critique of representation are therefore vital concerns in his own continuing insistence on the need to map the totality.

Jameson's desire to embark once again on a quest for totality is a reaction to a postmodern age which he understands as a product of the dominant capitalist system. Jean-François Lyotard famously terms the postmodern condition that in which the 'breaking up of the grand Narratives', renders theories such as Christianity and Marxism, which attempt to explain the totality of experience, obsolete.⁸³ However, Lyotard also notes the consequent difficulty of legitimating one representation of the world at the expense of others, asking 'Where, after the metanarratives, can legitimacy reside?'.⁸⁴ In his foreword to Lyotard's work, Jameson explains his attempts to reclaim the metanarrative of Marxism on the basis that 'the great master-narratives here are those that suggest that something beyond capitalism is possible, something radically different; and they also "legitimate" the praxis whereby political militants seek to bring that radically different social order into being'.⁸⁵ For Jameson, mapping the totality is necessary in order to re-establish agency against a dominant capitalist system of spatial organisation.

Jameson outlines his conception of the totality in *The Political Unconscious*, in which he attempts to incorporate Althusser's critique of the Hegelian Marxist totality

into his own revised format. Totality is rescued through his dialectical reading of Althusser and previous theories of totality, together with the added twist of Lacan's concept of the Symbolic. Reading the Symbolic alongside the Althusserian system of Imaginary and Real allows Jameson to conceptualise a history which cannot be directly apprehended but is knowable through the mediation of narrative. Jameson argues:

history – Althusser's 'absent cause,' Lacan's 'real' – is *not* a text, for it is fundamentally non-narrative and nonrepresentational; what can be added, however, is the proviso that history is inaccessible to us except in textual form, or in other words, that it can be approached only by way of prior (re)textualization.⁸⁶

In this way, Jameson later attempts to deflect the representational problems facing cognitive mapping through the assumption that the totality is not 'unknowable', but 'unrepresentable' (*Postmodernism*, p. 53).

This distinction has not always convinced critics of Jameson's work. John Frow suggests that Jameson's insistence that history is non-representable, yet is accessible through textual form, 'is surely a case of having one's referent and eating it too'. Frow adds, 'if history is accessible only through discursive or epistemological categories, is there not a real sense in which it therefore has only a discursive existence?'.⁸⁷ In this case, Jameson's mediations of history will not be immune from the critiques he recognises in application to other representational strategies. As Robert Young explains, 'if the Real is also a discursive construction it cannot function as a ground outside that enables a leverage of the inside'.⁸⁸ In short, Jameson's use of mediation as an attempt to escape the problems of representation associated with poststructuralist theory is not convincing. Despite his claim to

engage with structuralist and poststructuralist theorists, many critics have noted what Dominick LaCapra terms the 'highly selective approach' Jameson adopts.⁸⁹ In particular, his assertion that Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* is 'very much in the spirit of' *The Political Unconscious* has come under criticism.⁹⁰ In each case, critics have pointed to Jameson's inability to position his work outside the boundaries of a representational critique which he himself acknowledges.

Given these difficulties, it is important to recognise why Jameson continues to invest so heavily in the concept of totality. His quest to rehabilitate this concept is based on his insistence that capitalism itself is totalizing and it is only on these grounds that it can be resisted. However, these grounds remain insufficiently theorised within the text. He acknowledges, in the opening pages of *Postmodernism*, that any attempt to describe a totalizing system is liable to suffer from a "winner loses" logic', in which the theorist succeeds in presenting a vision of the total system only to emphasise the extent to which any resistance to that system is ineffective (p. 5). Despite this, however, he insists that the cultural dominant of postmodernism can only be addressed through an invocation of its features, in order to conceptualise 'the mission of political art' (p. 6). Jameson cites Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* as the 'obvious' example of 'winner loses' logic, and does not engage explicitly with the concept of resistance Foucault explores in his work. However, in the concluding comments of *Postmodernism*, Jameson asserts that 'a mode of production is not a "total system" in that forbidding sense; it includes a variety of counterforces and new tendencies within itself, of "residual" as well as "emergent" forces, which it must attempt to manage or control' (p. 406). His conception of capitalism may be totalising, but on this reading it also contains 'counterforces' which work in a similar

way to Foucault's concept of resistance, presumably of the type which allow Jameson himself to attempt to resist the system which saturates the world around him. Foucault is clearly opposed to any attempts to reconstruct a totality, and Jameson here distinguishes cognitive mapping from Foucault's conception of the system, yet reading Jameson alongside Foucault allows for a concept of resistance which exists despite the dominance of the system, a concept which is not fully explained in Jameson's own work.

Ultimately, Jameson's aim in *Postmodernism* is to propose a political art which will:

hold to the truth of postmodernism, that is to say, to its fundamental object – the world space of multinational capital – at the same time at which it achieves a breakthrough to some as yet unimaginable new mode of representing this last. (p. 54)

The key point to note here is that Jameson does not offer any suggestions as to how a representation of the totality can itself hope to escape that totality. By his own indirect admission, he cannot fully escape the representational problems that ensue from any attempt to mount a critique of a totalizing system. To accept these criticisms of Jameson's quest to conceptualise the totality does not, however, invalidate his attempt. Bosteels suggests that Jameson's use of the cartographic image is productive, in that he 'acknowledges and dialectically exploits the structural incompleteness of cartography', in which 'blind spots or unresolved social contradictions [...] resist the ideological formations and thereby register the historical effects of the "real"'.⁹¹ Bosteels is suggesting that the value of Jameson's conception of cognitive mapping lies in his refusal to relinquish the possibility of resistance within new representational forms. This, then is the most productive aspect

of cognitive mapping: its emphasis on a continually developing process of representing the world.

The closing pages of *Postmodernism* express Jameson's awareness of the limitations of cognitive mapping:

A new sense of global social structure was supposed to take on figuration and to displace the purely perceptual substitute of the geographical figure; cognitive mapping, which was meant to have a kind of oxymoronic value and to transcend the limits of mapping altogether, is, as a concept, drawn back by the force of gravity of the black hole of the map itself (one of the most powerful of all human conceptual instruments) and therein cancels out its own impossible originality. (p. 416)

The image of 'the black hole of the map' is a potent one, suggesting that all is drawn back to the dead-end of representation, which is ultimately a void in which political agency is impossible to establish. However, an alternative reading of this 'black hole' can focus on the potential for infinite re-evaluation of mapping and maps. Jameson's political commitment insists on the need to continue attempting to map the totality in order to enable political action, yet his theory leaves the door open for alternatives through this infinite re-evaluation. However, this need for continual reinterpretation must also be extended to Jameson's own analysis, as a survey of critical responses to cognitive mapping demonstrates.

An initial problem lies in Jameson's extrapolation of Kevin Lynch's work in the field of urban planning. Robert Young argues:

a comparison with London shows the tenuousness of the analogy; even cab drivers who have trained for months to learn "the knowledge" cannot carry the entire contents of the A-Z Map of London in their heads; moreover, the map which Londoners do use as a mental map is that of the Underground, which famously bears little correspondence to the layout of the city above.⁹²

Similarly, Kirby notes that Jameson's feelings of disorientation in the Bonaventure are presumably not shared by those who work in the hotel. She suggests, 'surely if he visited this site frequently, as a shop girl or maintenance man, he would gain a working knowledge of it, much as he might also come to detest it'.⁹³ Both critics are observing that simply knowing your way around an environment is no guarantee of obtaining political control. Both hotel workers and taxi drivers may regularly come into contact with others, such as businessmen and women and political figures, who receive more benefits from the dominant system, despite their lack of spatial awareness in a particular locale. However, these claims do miss the point somewhat: Jameson's concept of cognitive mapping depends on the individual's ability to relate his or her personal environment to that of the larger global economic system. This is not in any way to denigrate forms of local knowledge, but rather to argue that such knowledge alone is not sufficient to challenge the dominant space of late capitalism within and through which each locale operates. Young's over-literal reading also affects his comments regarding the map of the London Underground which is no less a map for all its non-realist qualities. Jameson's linking of spatial and political orientation is appropriate on the grounds that control over territories and their inhabitants has long been achieved through the mapping, or representing of spaces.

However, specific critiques of cognitive mapping highlight the extent to which Jameson is unable to overcome problems associated with the reabsorption into the dominant of his own attempts to represent the totality. Homer relates these difficulties already considered in relation to his evocation of postmodern hyperspace from within a position of privilege, asking 'who is the "we" being appealed to

here?'.⁹⁴ Similarly, Kirby raises the question of whether cognitive mapping will be available to all. She problematizes the nature of the cognitive mapping in which Jameson apparently 'assumes that cognitive maps will reintroduce a common ground of perception and understanding'. However, as Kirby enquires, 'will a standardization in theorizing spaces exclude, once again, the concerns of subjects who don't fit the model of "universal" subjectivity?'.⁹⁵ Such a situation is clearly contrary to Jameson's stated political aims, yet even his commitment to radical politics can be accused of universalising his own concerns at the expense of others.

Moreover, Jameson's conclusion that cognitive mapping 'was in reality nothing but a code word for "class consciousness"' highlights not only his continuing commitment to Marxism, but a potential excluding of other concerns (*Postmodernism*, p. 418). As Homi Bhabha argues, 'Jameson's urgent and admirable vigilance is not in doubt. It is the value invested in the visible difference of class that does not allow him to constitute the present moment as the insignia of other interstitial inscriptions of cultural difference'.⁹⁶ Jameson's privileging of class prevents him from paying due attention to other issues, such as race, gender or sexual preference. R. Radhakrishnan comments, 'Jameson's discourse is virtually silent on a whole range of formations such as feminism, ethnic studies, discourses of sexuality, etc., and yet makes total and global claims'. As such, he argues, 'one cannot but help noticing how, in the name of non-equivocal political engagement, Jameson's "cognitive map" blocks out "other spaces" that are working out "other" destinies based on "other" desires'.⁹⁷ Jameson states quite explicitly that he 'strongly endorse[s]', for example, feminists', African-American and third world struggles in an afterword to the volume in which Radhakrishnan's essay appears.⁹⁸ However, he

is also dubious about what he terms 'the problem of micropolitics' (*Postmodernism*, p. 17), desiring to unify the proliferation of possible identity politics based on gender, ethnicity, sexuality and so on, under the banner of class-based politics. Jameson argues that his call for cognitive mapping 'proposed the need for class consciousness of a new and hitherto undreamed of kind', yet the details of this process remain unexplained.⁹⁹ It is dubious whether those motivated primarily or additionally by issues other than class would or should accept a mapped totality based solely on class consciousness. This is not to suggest that Jameson's insistence on the importance of class relations is misplaced, and it is certainly not the intention of the critics discussed to advocate the primacy of other forms of identification *over* class politics. Rather, it is the purpose of such arguments to highlight the multiple forms of struggle which must be incorporated in any cognitive mapping which makes global claims.

Jameson's tendency to overlook other forms of struggle leads to the danger of his own radical politics failing to escape the fate of previous political interventions, which he observes are 'all somehow secretly disarmed and reabsorbed by a system of which they themselves might be considered a part, since they can achieve no distance from it' (*Postmodernism*, p. 49). Essentially, the problem remains that which he himself observes in creating a principle which:

will have to hold to the truth of postmodernism, that is to say, to its fundamental object – the world space of multinational capital – at the same time at which it achieves a breakthrough to some as yet unimaginable new mode of representing this last. (p. 54)

Jameson cannot fully differentiate his concept of cognitive mapping from the representational pitfalls which have afflicted previous conceptions of mapping, thus rendering his attempts to map the totality incomplete.

Nonetheless, Jameson's strategy of cognitive mapping remains productive. His aligning of spatial awareness and political agency is critical for mapping projects which aim to challenge dominant representations of spaces. Focusing on class at the expense of other aspects of power relations compromises his cognitive mapping, but highlights the importance of considering mapping a process rather than a completed project. Analysis of cognitive mapping demonstrates that representing the totality is neither possible nor a desirable aim. However, an examination of the ways in which Jameson applies cognitive mapping in the aesthetic field offers alternative methods which focus on charting the more productive area of 'counterforces' within the dominant system of spatial organization.

Reading Jameson's Mappings

the truth of our social life as a whole – in Lukács's terms, as a totality – is increasingly irreconcilable with the possibilities of aesthetic expression or articulation available to us.¹⁰⁰

Jameson continues to attempt to represent the totality through the medium of cognitive mapping in art criticism. He applies his concept in a variety of contexts from the mid 1980s to the mid 1990s and suggests that cognitive mapping is applied both within postmodern artworks themselves, and in his criticism of such works. In *Postmodernism* he calls for the creation of a newly politicized art, which will exemplify mapping strategies. An essay on third world literature identifies mapping

strategies in such works. From the beginning of the 1990s, his work moves away from literary analysis to film studies; these are investigated in order to establish further developments of the strategy of cognitive mapping. Analysis of these readings is helpful in establishing the implications of cognitive mapping, both as a method of reading and as an aspect of artworks themselves. While Jameson's readings confirm the potential of his theory of cognitive mapping, they also demonstrate the persistence of the theoretical problems highlighted in the previous section.

Jameson begins by using literature not as a form of cognitive mapping, but in order to stress the need for mapping strategies in the original version of 'Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism'. Central to Jameson's thesis is the conception of postmodernism 'not as a style but rather as a cultural dominant', which occurs on the basis that 'aesthetic production today has become integrated into commodity production generally'.¹⁰¹ It is on this basis that postmodernism cannot simply be rejected, but must be encountered on its own fragmented terms. Jameson therefore celebrates the postmodern novels of E. L. Doctorow, in particular *Ragtime*, precisely because 'he has had to elaborate his work by way of that very cultural logic of the postmodern which is itself the mark and symptom of his dilemma'. *Ragtime* is set in New York in the early 1900s, and intermingles the narratives of characters from all social classes, mixing real historical detail and persons with fictional ones.¹⁰² The novel focuses on issues of oppression and struggle, depicting incidents of racism, the plight of recent immigrants and the working class, and the struggles of revolutionary movements. Jameson argues that the mingling of real historical figures with fictional characters, together with 'a

rigorous principle of selection in which only simple declarative sentences (predominantly mobilized by the verb “to be”) are received’ are features which inscribe ‘the crisis of historicity’ in the novel. He concludes, ‘this historical novel can no longer set out to represent the historical past; it can only “represent” our ideas and stereotypes about that past’.¹⁰³

Linda Hutcheon’s readings of postmodern writing have challenged Jameson’s views, and a partial reply to her critique appears in the 1991 *Postmodernism*. Hutcheon argues ‘it is just as easy to argue that,’ in *Ragtime*, ‘the historical referent is very much present – and in spades’.¹⁰⁴ In raising the problematic issue of the representation of history, she argues, a writer such as Doctorow is refuting any attempt to impose a single dominant interpretation of history. She is critical of Jameson’s ‘lament that all fiction today can do is ““represent” our ideas and stereotypes about that past,”’ and suggests that novels such as Doctorow’s ‘reply that this is all they have ever been able to do, and that this is the lesson of the entire crisis of contemporary historiography’.¹⁰⁵ Hutcheon therefore concludes that Jameson ‘does not want the contradictions and paradoxes; he does not want questioning. Instead he wants answers, totalizing replies – which postmodernism cannot and will not offer’.¹⁰⁶

In response, Jameson writes, ‘that *Ragtime* has political content and even something like a political “meaning” seems in any case obvious’, and includes a lengthy quotation, ‘expertly articulated’ by Hutcheon, to this effect (*Postmodernism*, p. 22). However, he continues, ‘this is what the novel would have meant had it not been a postmodern artifact’ (p. 22). The novel is a prime example of a postmodern work, in that it refers to a historical period, yet refuses to offer an explanation of

social relations of that time which is not immediately challenged. *Ragtime*, Jameson suggests, 'not only resists interpretation, it is organized systematically and formally to short-circuit an older type of social and historical interpretation which it perpetually holds out and withdraws' (p. 23).

Jameson's reply to Hutcheon, however, cannot diminish the extent to which Hutcheon's concept of 'historiographic metafiction', written by Doctorow, Rushdie and others, challenges conventional methods of interpretation precisely by positing an alternative method. As Hutcheon suggests, to problematise interpretation is not to deny it, and this stance in itself produces highly politicised writing. The opening pages of *Ragtime* present a stable, white, bourgeois world in which 'There were no Negroes. There were no immigrants'. By the next page, however, the real-life revolutionary Emma Goldman has spoken against this view and 'Apparently there *were* Negroes. There *were* immigrants'.¹⁰⁷ In highlighting the different ways in which the environment can be represented, Doctorow's novel makes clear the extent to which such representations have political consequences, without attempting to exonerate his own work from such partiality. Nonetheless, this position remains problematic: Doctorow's novel clearly has particular political sympathies, yet in accepting the partial nature of any interpretation of history, he is unable to offer a normative position against which his own political sympathies can be verified as preferable.

This, as I have argued, is a central dilemma of poststructuralist thought, which continues to be played out in both theory and fictional works. It is also, of course, precisely the problem which Jameson both acknowledges and explores. Hutcheon is correct to observe that while 'the problematized histories of postmodernism have

little to do with the single totalizing History of Marxism,' nonetheless, 'they cannot be accused of neglecting or refusing engagement with the issues of historical representation and knowledge'.¹⁰⁸ However, her claim that Jameson 'does not want the questioning' that is characteristic of postmodernism is countered by the focus of his work, which centres on precisely these questions. The relative weakness of Jameson's assessment of individual postmodern works as disassociated from real historical referents, therefore, does not compromise the strength of his continuing refusal to elide the problems such works raise for his own theory.

The weaknesses of Jameson's analysis lies largely in his terminology, which denies a novel such as Doctorow's a place within his system of cognitive mapping. It is important to recall that despite his description of the novel as 'the weakest of the newer cultural areas', at least in its Western form, Jameson praises Doctorow's novel not in spite of, but *because* of its status as a postmodern work (*Postmodernism*, p. 298). Elsewhere Jameson states that cognitive mapping 'presupposes a radical incompatibility between the possibilities of an older national language or culture (which is still the framework in which literature is being produced today) and the transnational, worldwide organization of the economic infrastructure of contemporary capitalism.'¹⁰⁹ However, this comment is included in an analysis of the film *Dog Day Afternoon*, described by Jameson as 'an indecisive aesthetic and cultural phenomenon' which nonetheless 'takes on the values of a revealing symptom'. This occurs as Jameson believes it is necessary 'to interrogate the artistic production of our own time for signs of some new, so far only dimly conceivable, collective forms which may be expected to replace the older individualistic ones (those either of conventional realism or of a now conventionalized modernism)'.¹¹⁰

Contemporary literature and film, therefore, raise the issues of representation and legitimation with which Jameson's theoretical work is concerned and share the ambivalence of his own attempts to redescribe the world. A more useful application of cognitive mapping would be to include works such as Doctorow's, which illustrate the need for new systems of mapping, as a foundational step in that mapping itself. If we understand cognitive mapping as a continuing struggle with these issues rather than a rejection of their relevance, then Jameson's strategy remains useful.

A central feature of Jameson's mapping strategy is that it is necessary as a response to an increasingly globalised environment. While *Postmodernism* focuses primarily on American artworks, an examination of Jameson's readings of fiction from outside the Western world highlights a greater difficulty in the application of cognitive mapping. The debate surrounding his 1986 essay, 'Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism', emphasises the problems suggested by the tendency of cognitive mapping to subsume other forms of resistance. Controversy has arisen over Jameson's use of the category of 'Third-World Literature' to speak for the problems of the area designated the 'Third World', or 'a range of other countries which have suffered the experience of colonialism and imperialism'.¹¹¹ Jameson argues in favour of an increase in the amount of literature taught in American universities from the third world and the essay includes detailed analyses of works by one Chinese and one Senegalese writer, suggesting that these works demonstrate a 'new mapping process'.¹¹² However, in what he admits is 'a sweeping hypothesis', he claims 'all third-world texts are necessarily, I want to argue, allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call *national*

allegories'. This comes about through the omission of one of the fundamental splits in Western (in Jameson's terms 'First-World') culture:

one of the determinants of capitalist culture, that is the culture of the Western realist and modernist novel, is a radical split between the private and the public, between the poetic and the political, between what we have come to think of as the domain of sexuality and the unconscious and that of the public world of classes, of the economic, and of secular political power: in other words, Freud versus Marx.¹¹³

Literature produced in the third world, reasons Jameson, does not reflect that split and will consequently allegorise personal relations to reflect nationalist concerns.

A notable critic of Jameson's stance is Aijaz Ahmad. Ahmad argues that the 'binary opposition' created between first and third worlds is not supported in fact, and that it ignores the many contradictions within and between these groupings.¹¹⁴ Certainly, it is clearly inappropriate to equate writing from one area of the third world with another which may be wholly different in terms of geography, culture and economics. Meanwhile, within first world literature, Ahmad points out, there are groups who identify far more strongly with third world positions: African-American and feminist writers in the United States are a possible example here. Sean Homer's observation that Jameson's analysis of Western postmodern writing excludes authors such as Toni Morrison is highly pertinent as a reminder of the narrowly selective and insufficiently substantiated nature of his view.¹¹⁵ Similarly, Jameson offers no suggestions as to how the growing number of 'migrant intellectual' writers, such as Rushdie and Ondaatje, whose writing contains influences from and references to both the first and the third worlds, are to be considered in this paradigm.

Moreover, defining the third world through the experiences of colonialism and imperialism denies these nations, as Ahmad argues, a history outwith that of

‘externally inserted phenomena’.¹¹⁶ Robert Young suggests that postmodernism, ‘in which the old imperial maps have been lost, is the condition not just of late capitalism, but also of the loss of Eurocentrism’.¹¹⁷ Elsewhere, Jameson locates the beginnings of this process in the ‘radical otherness of colonial life, colonial suffering and exploitation, [and] the structural connections between that and this, between space and daily life in the metropolis’.¹¹⁸ This disorientation is then associated with the emergence of modernism. In this respect, then, Jameson appears to be ignoring his own anti-colonial historicism by returning to a previous version of capitalist expansion, in which the East is defined by the West. Ahmad also points out that as the third world is within the global capitalist system, then it must also experience the consequences Jameson associates with that system. Therefore, ‘one must conclude also that the separation between the public and the private, so characteristic of capitalism, has occurred there as well’. This is particularly the case ‘among the urban intelligentsia which produces most of the written texts and is itself caught in the world of capitalist commodities’.¹¹⁹ Texts are then produced which reflect the alienation of the capitalist entity and which are consequently not the type of allegory that Jameson suggests.

Most powerfully, as a citizen of Pakistan, Ahmad objects to the feeling he has that Jameson appears as, ‘in his own opinion, my civilizational Other’.¹²⁰ The conclusion of his essay summarises the ways in which Ahmad explodes the binary opposition within which Jameson works. He argues that ‘the ideological conditions of a text’s production are never singular but always several’, citing the various possible interest groups to which any individual might belong. He concludes:

I want to insist that within the unity that has been bestowed upon our globe by the irreconcilable struggle between capital and labour, there are more and more texts which cannot easily be placed within this or that world. Jameson's is not a First World text; mine is not a Third World text. We are not each other's civilizational Others.¹²¹

Thus it appears that despite Jameson's obvious sympathy for the troubles of the third world, his use of mapping strategies to itemise these in a first world context serves rather to appropriate these discourses. The divisions that he perceives between these worlds are further intensified, while exactly the sort of alternative discourses he seeks to promote are negated. Santiago Colás observes, in his reading of Jameson's work:

the 'Third World' is, therefore, a utopian space within Jameson's theory in the full sense that it no longer exists, it has been abolished, it is a no-place, and at the same time provides us with a site of resistance in the sense of a representation of a qualitatively different form of social organisation.¹²²

However, that this site of resistance appropriates the experience of the third world removes the space from precisely the sort of local struggle which may be successful in resisting some elements of the dominant. Jameson's attempts to document a 'new mapping process' appears at this point very much, 'disarmed and reabsorbed' by the dominant system it purports to resist. That this stems from his designation of texts as first world or third world is a warning that cognitive mapping cannot function as a means of resistance when it is based on such a fixed point of reference.

This difficulty reappears in Jameson's work on film from the early 1990s. *The Geopolitical Aesthetic* continues the process of cognitive mapping: 'the films discussed here have been selected with a view towards an unsystematic mapping or scanning of the world system itself'.¹²³ To this end, he divides his book into two

sections, the first of which analyses conspiracy narratives from American cinema as attempts 'to think a system so vast that it cannot be encompassed by the natural and historically developed categories of perception with which human beings normally orient themselves'.¹²⁴ In the second section of the book, examples from non-US cinema are investigated as allegories for the inadequacy of the nation state in the new geotopical, or worldwide, spatial system. Perry Anderson points to Jameson's celebration of non-US cinema, including works by French directors as well as third world examples, over US film, arguing 'it would be hard to think of sympathies less Eurocentric [sic] than these'.¹²⁵ However, while Anderson may well be correct as to Jameson's *sympathies*, his theory does continue to essentialize both non-Western and Western artistic production in a way which excludes the heterogeneous nature of this art. The difference in the ways in which US and non-US films are addressed is clearly problematic, as Victor Burgin suggests: 'the implicit hierarchical effect of Jameson's distinction between the Hollywood films in part 1 and the non-US films in part 2 is to attribute a global perspective to America and a more narrowly national perspective to the rest'.¹²⁶ Such problems with Jameson's application of cognitive mapping strategies do not invalidate the entire project, but continue to emphasise a need for vigilance against the production of theoretical maps which reproduce the power relations which they aim to oppose.

Despite the reappearance of this problem with cognitive mapping, however, Jameson does develop his theory in a manner which suggests a more responsive form of mapping. He writes:

Critics and theorists have shown enthusiasm for the proposition that figures and narratives can bear many different meanings at the same time, and know distinct, sometimes even contradictory functions. They

have been less eager to make an inventory of some of the specific meanings in question, something I try to do here.¹²⁷

Described in this way, cognitive mapping becomes a heterogeneous grouping of interpretations, which allows for the conflictual nature of these meanings. Jameson retains the notion of totality, which continues to pose difficulties for his theories, however. He states that he attempts to make an inventory of 'some of the specific meanings in question', yet the admission that only 'some' of these meanings can be explored denies any claim of mapping the totality. Moreover, it is not clear at what point a full inventory of such meanings could be reached, or who would be qualified to make such a decision. Jameson's study of conspiratorial allegory suggests that he accepts the partial nature of his own cognitive maps, suggesting 'it needs to be marked as imperfect in order to serve as a cognitive map', which, 'it would be disastrous to confuse with reality itself'.¹²⁸ Perhaps, then, it is best to conceive of cognitive mapping as a necessarily imperfect process, which aims for a utopian projection of the social totality, but must continually be reappraised and rewritten.

Jameson's own readings can be seen to reflect this conception of cognitive mapping. Analysing the film *The Parallax View*, he argues that in the illustrating of a journalist's attempts to infiltrate a conspiracy in which he soon becomes mysteriously and fatally involved, 'resolution is not even presupposed in advance'. As a consequence, 'the representational dilemma is inscribed in the text and thereby acknowledged, rather than repressed or resolved'. Finally, 'the very problem of representability now becomes in some sense its own solution – the thing being done, as it were, by showing it cannot be done in the first place'.¹²⁹ In highlighting the film's foregrounding of the problem of representability, Jameson returns to the

conclusions reached through his reading of Doctorow's *Ragtime*, which he also celebrated for representing the problems of representation. It appears, therefore, that Jameson's cognitive mapping continues to find productive the depiction of the 'representational dilemma', even as he strives to transcend it.

Jameson's own cognitive mappings raise issues consistent with those discussed in my analysis of his postmodern spatialising and in the theory of cognitive mapping. His work on postmodern hyperspace highlights the extent to which spaces are produced through social relations, and stresses the political significance of representations of space. Moreover, his emphasis on mapping demonstrates, against some of his own implications, that spatial analysis is politically committed, while his insistence on considering the global environment is timely. The problems that appear throughout his work are also useful reminders of the need for vigilance in the search for alternatives. His tendency to universalise his US experience makes clear the need to consider the heterogeneous nature of spaces and of individuals' experience of them. The essentialising of first and third worlds and the subsuming of non-class based forms of resistance emphasises the need to constantly re-evaluate mapping strategies in order to avoid the reassertion of dominant ideas in the name of resistance. Although Jameson cannot free himself from the poststructuralist problematising of representation, and his aim to map the totality is never realised, his work is extremely productive in continuing to pursue political concerns. My analysis of his application of mapping strategies in film and literary criticism demonstrates that his principles are most successful in highlighting the representational problems of current artworks. Although Jameson never makes this explicit, to raise such issues is very much to understand such works as political. While Jameson's aim to invent

new forms of representation which go beyond current constraints remains utopian, his insistence on pursuing mapping strategies allows him to continue to engage with the central political problems of space and representation.

This chapter has identified the central concerns of mapping strategies in theoretical work. The remainder of this thesis argues that such strategies are also seen in contemporary fiction. Mapping strategies are used to emphasise the extent to which maps, as representations of space, help to construct the territories they depict. Spaces, as Lefebvre suggests, are socially produced, and both theoretical and fictional works demonstrate that the power relations within a society create conflicting definitions of spaces, some of which will inevitably come to dominate others. Identifying the constructed and variable nature of these dominant maps of space also challenges their seeming neutrality. However, while both theory and fiction can help to highlight the political significance of the production of space, writing resistant representations of space proves more problematic. Each of the theorists discussed has confronted the problematising of representation itself, a process central to postmodern fiction. Mapping strategies remain ambiguous, as Jameson's work in the field demonstrates, through the risk of reproducing the very structures of dominance that they seek to disarm. Fictional representations of spaces parallel Jameson's process of cognitive mapping in explicitly foregrounding the tensions that exist between the need to map spaces and the challenge of representing resistant understandings of space.

- ¹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 11. Further references to this edition will be given after quotations in the text.
- ² Bruno Bosteels, 'From Text to Territory: Félix Guattari's Cartographies of the Unconscious', in *Deleuze and Guattari: New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy and Culture*, ed. by Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin Jon Heller (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp. 145-74 (p. 150).
- ³ Rob Shields, *Lefebvre, Love and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 172.
- ⁴ Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), p. 269.
- ⁵ Virginia Blum and Heidi Nast, 'Where's the Difference? The Heterosexualization of Alterity in Henri Lefebvre and Jacques Lacan', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 14 (1996), 559-80 (p. 576).
- ⁶ Shields, p. 13.
- ⁷ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 194.
- ⁸ Michel Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984*, ed. by Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. by Alan Sheridan and others (London: Routledge, 1988). Foucault notes sardonically, 'if [power and knowledge] were identical, I would not have to study them and I would be spared a lot of fatigue as a result', p. 43.
- ⁹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 34.
- ¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume One, An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 93.
- ¹¹ *The History of Sexuality*, pp. 93-6.
- ¹² 'Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces'', trans. by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics*, 16 (1986), 22-27 (p. 24). This article is the first published English translation of a lecture originally given by Foucault in 1967.
- ¹³ Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. by Donald F. Bouchard, trans. by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 214.
- ¹⁴ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. by Colin Gordon, trans. by Colin Gordon et al (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), p. 86.
- ¹⁵ Jean Baudrillard, *Forget Foucault*, trans. by Nicole Dufresne (New York: Semiotext(e), 1987), pp. 9-10.
- ¹⁶ *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, p. 148; p. 153.
- ¹⁷ Edward W. Said, 'Foucault and the Imagination of Power', in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. by David Couzens Hoy (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), pp. 150-55 (p. 152).
- ¹⁸ *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, p. 230.
- ¹⁹ Benjamin Genocchio, 'Discourse, Discontinuity, Difference: The Question of "Other" Spaces', in *Postmodern Cities and Spaces*, ed. by Sophie Watson and Katherine Gibson, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), pp. 35-46 (p. 43).
- ²⁰ Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1978), pp. 31-63.
- ²¹ *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*, p. 154.
- ²² Nancy Fraser, 'Foucault's Body Language: A Post-Humanist Political Rhetoric?', *Salmagundi*, 61 (1983), 55-70 (p. 56).
- ²³ Michel Foucault, 'What is Enlightenment?', in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rabinow, trans. by Catherine Porter (London: Penguin, 1991), pp. 32-50 (p. 45).
- ²⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. and ed. by Seán Hand (London: Althone Press, 1988), p. 44.
- ²⁵ Chris Philo, 'Foucault's Geography', in *Thinking Space*, ed. by Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 205-38 (p. 224).
- ²⁶ Said, 'Foucault and the Imagination of Power', pp. 150-55 (p. 153).
- ²⁷ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. by A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock, 1972), p. 49.
- ²⁸ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 3.
- ²⁹ Angelika Bammer, 'Introduction', in *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*, ed. by Angelika Bammer (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. xi-xx (p. xi).
- ³⁰ *Orientalism*, pp. 1-2.
- ³¹ See, for example, Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992).
- ³² *Orientalism*, p. 273.

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- ³³ *Orientalism*, p. 5; p. 94.
- ³⁴ Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 129.
- ³⁵ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Penguin, 1994), pp. xi-xii.
- ³⁶ Jacques Derrida, 'The Theater of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation', in *Writing and Difference*, ed. and trans. by Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1978), pp. 232-50 (p. 250).
- ³⁷ Ahmad, *In Theory*, pp. 185-6.
- ³⁸ *Orientalism*, p. 272.
- ³⁹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'The Rani of Sirmur', in *Europe and its Others*, ed. by Francis Barker et al (Colchester, University of Essex Press, 1985), pp. 128-51 (p. 132).
- ⁴⁰ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 271-313 (p. 271).
- ⁴¹ The conversation between Foucault and Deleuze is published as 'Intellectuals and Power' in Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, pp. 205-17.
- ⁴² 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', pp. 271-313 (p. 275).
- ⁴³ *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, pp. 207-8.
- ⁴⁴ 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', pp. 271-313 (p. 297).
- ⁴⁵ 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', pp. 271-313 (p. 308).
- ⁴⁶ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 204-5.
- ⁴⁷ Benita Parry's essay 'Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse', *Oxford Literary Review*, 9 (1987), 27-58, is an example of an opposing view on this issue.
- ⁴⁸ *In Other Worlds*, p. 209.
- ⁴⁹ 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', pp. 271-313 (p. 308).
- ⁵⁰ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 2.
- ⁵¹ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 44. Further references to this edition will be given after quotations in the text.
- ⁵² Paul Patton, 'Imaginary Cities: Images of Postmodernity', in *Postmodern Cities and Spaces*, ed. by Sophie Watson and Katherine Gibson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), pp. 112-21 (p. 114).
- ⁵³ Patton, pp. 112-21 (p. 114).
- ⁵⁴ Jameson acknowledges this debt in *Postmodernism*, p. 399.
- ⁵⁵ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. by Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), pp. 1-2.
- ⁵⁶ Lefebvre, pp. 49-51.
- ⁵⁷ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), p. 240.
- ⁵⁸ Harvey, p. 305.
- ⁵⁹ Mike Davis, 'Urban Renaissance and the Spirit of Postmodernism', *New Left Review*, 151 (1985), 106-113 (p. 107).
- ⁶⁰ Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', 22-27 (p. 22).
- ⁶¹ Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, 'Introduction', in *Thinking Space*, ed. by Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 1-30 (p. 1).
- ⁶² Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', 22-27 (p. 22).
- ⁶³ Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, p. 70.
- ⁶⁴ Massey, p. 269.
- ⁶⁵ Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 154.
- ⁶⁶ Patton, pp. 12-121 (p. 114).
- ⁶⁷ Patton, pp. 12-121 (p. 112).
- ⁶⁸ Davis, 106-13 (p. 112).
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- ⁷⁰ Sean Homer, *Fredric Jameson: Marxism, Hermeneutics, Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), p. 138.
- ⁷¹ Brian Jarvis, *Postmodern Cartographies: The Geographical Imagination in Contemporary American Culture* (London: Pluto Press, 1998), p. 48.

- ⁷² D. Matless, 'An Occasion for Geography: Landscape, Representation, and Foucault's Corpus', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 10 (1992), 41-56 (p. 43). Soja describes the visit he made to the Bonaventure Hotel together with Jameson and Lefebvre in both *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989), and *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).
- ⁷³ Ruth Fincher and Jane M. Jacobs, eds., *Cities of Difference* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1998), p. 10.
- ⁷⁴ Jim Masselos, 'Postmodern Bombay: Fractured Discourses', in *Postmodern Cities and Spaces*, ed. by Sophie Watson and Katherine Gibson (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), pp. 199-215 (p. 208).
- ⁷⁵ Massey, p. 163.
- ⁷⁶ Massey, p. 165.
- ⁷⁷ Victor Burgin, *In/Different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 25.
- ⁷⁸ Fredric Jameson, 'Cognitive Mapping', in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 347-57 (p. 356).
- ⁷⁹ Conceptions of the form of and even the need for a sense of totality have inevitably been various, and often conflicting within the tradition of Western Marxism, as documented by Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984).
- ⁸⁰ Jay, p. 514-5. See, for example, Jean-François Lyotard's declaration of a 'war on totality' in 'Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?', trans. by Régis Durand, in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 71-82 (p. 82); Baudrillard's refusal to posit a normative position outwith the process of simulation in *Simulacra and Simulation*; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's celebration of the schizophrenic in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Robert Hurley et al (London: Althone Press, 1984).
- ⁸¹ Fredric Jameson, 'Foreword', in Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. xix.
- ⁸² Bruno Bosteels, 'A Misreading of Maps: The Politics of Cartography in Marxism and Poststructuralism', in *Signs of Change: Premodern→Modern→Postmodern*, ed. by Stephen Barker (Albany: State University of New York, 1996), pp. 109-38 (p. 120).
- ⁸³ Lyotard, p. 15.
- ⁸⁴ Lyotard, p. xxv.
- ⁸⁵ Fredric Jameson, 'Foreword', in *The Postmodern Condition*, p. xix.
- ⁸⁶ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (London: Routledge, 1983), p. 82.
- ⁸⁷ John Frow, 'Marxism after Structuralism', *Southern Review*, 17 (1984), 33-50 (p. 39).
- ⁸⁸ Young, *White Mythologies*, p. 109.
- ⁸⁹ Dominick LaCapra, 'Review of *The Political Unconscious*', *History and Theory*, 21 (1982), 83-106 (p. 88).
- ⁹⁰ Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, p. 22. See Homer for a detailed critique of Jameson's invocation of the work of Deleuze and Guattari.
- ⁹¹ Bosteels, 'A Misreading of Maps', pp. 109-38 (p. 124).
- ⁹² Young, p. 117.
- ⁹³ Kathleen M. Kirby, *Indifferent Boundaries: Spatial Concepts of Human Subjectivity* (New York: Guilford Press, 1996), p. 57.
- ⁹⁴ Homer, p. 139.
- ⁹⁵ Kirby, p. 62.
- ⁹⁶ Bhabha, p. 223.
- ⁹⁷ R. Radhakrishnan, 'Poststructuralist Politics – Towards a Theory of Coalition', in *Postmodernism, Jameson, Critique*, ed. by Douglas Kellner (Washington, DC: Maisonneuve Press, 1989), pp. 301-32 (p. 322, p. 323-24).
- ⁹⁸ Fredric Jameson, 'Afterword – Marxism and Postmodernism', in *Postmodernism, Jameson, Critique*, ed. by Douglas Kellner (Washington, DC: Maisonneuve Press, 1989), pp. 369-87 (p. 385).

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- ⁹⁹ Jameson, 'Afterword', pp. 369-87 (p. 387).
- ¹⁰⁰ Fredric Jameson, 'Class and Allegory in Contemporary Mass Culture: *Dog Day Afternoon* as a Political Film', *Signatures of the Visible* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 35-54 (p. 54).
- ¹⁰¹ Fredric Jameson, 'Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', *New Left Review*, 146 (1984), 53-92 (p. 56).
- ¹⁰² E. L. Doctorow, *Ragtime* (London: Picador, 1985).
- ¹⁰³ Jameson, 'Postmodernism', 53-92 (pp. 70-1).
- ¹⁰⁴ Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 89.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Poetics*, p. 212.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Poetics*, p. 214.
- ¹⁰⁷ Doctorow, pp. 11-13.
- ¹⁰⁸ Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 57.
- ¹⁰⁹ Jameson, 'Class and Allegory in Contemporary Mass Culture', pp. 35-54 (p. 54).
- ¹¹⁰ Jameson, 'Class and Allegory in Contemporary Mass Culture', pp. 35-54 (p. 54).
- ¹¹¹ Fredric Jameson, 'Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism', *Social Text* 15 (1986), 65-88 (p. 67). Jameson defends his use of the term 'Third World' in the introduction to his essay and I use his terminology in this section in the interests of clarity.
- ¹¹² Jameson, 'Third-World Literature', 65-88 (p. 73).
- ¹¹³ Jameson, 'Third-World Literature', 65-88 (p. 69).
- ¹¹⁴ Ahmad, *In Theory*, p. 101.
- ¹¹⁵ Homer, p. 117.
- ¹¹⁶ Ahmad, p. 100.
- ¹¹⁷ Young, *White Mythologies*, p. 117.
- ¹¹⁸ Fredric Jameson, *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature: Modernism and Imperialism* (Derry: Field Day Theatre Company, 1988), p. 12.
- ¹¹⁹ Ahmad, p. 107.
- ¹²⁰ Ahmad, p. 96.
- ¹²¹ Ahmad, p. 122.
- ¹²² Santiago Colás, 'The Third World in Jameson's "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism"', *Social Text*, 10 (1988), 258-70 (p. 258).
- ¹²³ Fredric Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 1.
- ¹²⁴ Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic*, p. 2.
- ¹²⁵ Perry Anderson, *The Origins of Postmodernity* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 124.
- ¹²⁶ Burgin, p. 305.
- ¹²⁷ Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic*, p. 2.
- ¹²⁸ Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic*, p. 9.
- ¹²⁹ Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic*, pp. 55-6.

Chapter Two: Salman Rushdie

I blame fiction [...] The followers of one fiction knock down another popular piece of make-believe, and bingo! It's war. (Salman Rushdie)¹

A character in Salman Rushdie's novel *The Moor's Last Sigh* describes the violent conflict that is engulfing her city as a struggle between competing political 'fictions'. Rushdie's novels attempt to document the political fictions that shape the world on the grounds that, as he writes in *Imaginary Homelands*, 'description is itself a political act'.² The countries and cities of the Indian subcontinent are shown to be shaped by a range of political fictions which offer conflicting representations of space. Rushdie's novels are themselves political fictions, which offer an alternative map of the spaces they describe. He suggests that 'redescribing a world is the necessary first step towards changing it,' and argues that 'the novel is one way of denying the official, politicians' version of the truth'.³ This chapter analyses the extent to which Rushdie's novels provide fictional maps which both challenge dominant representations of the spaces of the subcontinent and represent resistant spaces.

Rushdie's earlier works focus on the postcolonial nation and this chapter begins by examining the production of space through colonial and postcolonial spatial relations in *Midnight's Children*. The novel draws maps of post-Independence India which challenge the apparent neutrality of the dominant discourses, or the 'official, politicians' version of the truth,' of this space. Rushdie redescribes this environment in an attempt to document resistant interpretations of such spaces. The second half of this chapter analyses the other major spatial presence in Rushdie's

work: that of the city. Despite the extensive discussion of the city, in particular Bombay, in several of the novels, relatively little critical attention has been paid to Rushdie's mappings of this space. My analysis explores the spaces that Rushdie describes in order to draw parallels between the cartographic models of theoretical works and the mapping strategies of his fiction.

Space and the Colonial Encounter: *Midnight's Children*

Midnight's Children maps the spaces of the Indian subcontinent before, during and after the transition from colony to the postcolonial nations of India and Pakistan. The novel is narrated by Saleem Sinai, who is born on the stroke of midnight at the very moment of India's independence and, consequently, considers himself 'handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country'.⁴ *Midnight's Children* therefore tells India's story along with Saleem's. Rushdie states, 'one of the things you have to do with new countries is to draw maps of them. That's one of the things that the book was an attempt to do'.⁵ Rushdie's maps make explicit the social relations which produce the new postcolonial spaces of the subcontinent.

The novel begins before the 1947 declaration of Independence from British imperial rule, and demonstrates the extent to which the spaces of India are produced by conflict between coloniser and colonised. Saleem's grandfather, Aadam Aziz, learns 'that India – like radium – had been discovered by the Europeans,' and remains separate from his European friends on account of their belief 'that he was somehow the invention of their ancestors' (*Midnight's Children*, p. 11). Rushdie's work, like Edward Said's, does not suggest that colonised nations are entirely determined by colonial description, but does emphasise the production of colonial

spaces through the conflicting understandings of the nation that result. The colonial 'discovery' of India emphasises the extent to which the incorporation of India on colonial maps is also a representation of its political status under imperial control. Juxtaposed with descriptions of events such as the massacre at Amritsar, in which peacefully protesting Indians are shot under the orders of British forces, these descriptions give a portrait of colonialism which highlights both the violence of its military supremacy, and its reliance on a dominant system of knowledge in which the colonised subject is defined, and defined as inferior, by the colonial power. Aziz, and the novel as a whole, resist these representations.

The novel's depiction of imperial violence, such as the massacre at Amritsar, challenges dominant colonial representations of space by demonstrating the extent to which violent methods are needed to enforce the assumption of imperial rule. Lefebvre argues that the social production of space is concealed by 'the illusion of transparency,' in which space is viewed 'as innocent, as free of traps or secret places'.⁶ The dominant discourse of colonial space gives the illusion of transparency by asserting that imperial control is both inevitable, and in the colonised people's interests. This dominant is challenged by its overt reliance on force, which reveals that the spaces produced are neither innocent, nor free of traps and secret places. The massacre occurs after the British have passed an act against political agitation, an action which Aziz suspects will cause trouble:

the Indians have fought for the British; so many of them have seen the world by now, and been tainted by Abroad. They will not easily go back to the old world. The British are wrong to try and turn back the clock. (*Midnight's Children*, p. 33)

Aziz recognises the process of decolonisation, in which changing social relations between coloniser and colonised will eventually produce an independent India. Social relations are continually in flux in the global environment, and produce spaces, or 'worlds', which can no longer be contained by imperial maps.

Aziz's comment is revealing, as it emphasises that postcolonial spaces will be different from the spaces produced in India before the colonial encounter. *Midnight's Children* makes reference to many aspects of India's pre-colonial past, including the religious epics which continue to influence Indian belief systems and a pluralist narrative form. Nonetheless, the novel refutes any attempt to retrieve a nativist consciousness which could return India to a space similar to that of the pre-colonial subcontinent. On Aziz's return to Kashmir after completing his studies in Europe, he is upbraided by the local boatman, Tai, for his foreign ways. Tai is described as 'a quirky, enduring familiar spirit of the valley,' who is the antithesis to the ideas of change and progress in which Aziz believes (p. 15). However, Tai, an embodiment of a more traditional concept of India, is also 'a watery Caliban,' and this reference to the colonised native of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* ensures that Tai is defined within a colonial framework. As a result of such features, Stephen Baker argues that 'it is important to identify the extent to which Rushdie's writing seems unable to escape the discourse of Orientalism'.⁷ Rushdie's position as a writer is to represent India as a hybrid, postcolonial nation which cannot return to a pre-colonial culture in order to represent itself in the now-global environment. As such, then, he is not so much 'unable' to escape Orientalist discourse as highlighting the hybridity that characterises postcolonial transformations.

Aziz's Western education highlights the creation of hybrid spaces in the colonial encounter. His name is reminiscent of the Indian doctor's in E. M. Forster's novel *A Passage to India*, a point noted by the author.⁸ Rushdie acknowledges the continuing influence of novels such as Forster's on literary depictions of India in the West, yet also embarks on a process of re-writing colonial representations of Indian spaces, a process he identifies as 'the empire writes back to the centre,' in a well-known essay.⁹ Rushdie's literary project is reflected in Aziz's own dilemma of being 'caught in a strange middle ground' between his Indian upbringing and Western education (*Midnight's Children*, p. 12). *Midnight's Children* identifies the production of India according to colonial representations as a dominant which can be challenged, yet the narrative continues to acknowledge the impossibility of asserting a resistant representation which altogether precludes colonial influence. The novel demonstrates that even after the departure of the British, the influence of the colonial system of knowledge remains. Saleem's father demonstrates the internalised racism that exists in the new postcolonial state, announcing to his neighbours 'All the best people are white under the skin; I have merely given up pretending' (p. 179). The narrative continues: 'His neighbours, all of whom were darker than he, laughed politely and felt curiously ashamed' (p. 179). Moving beyond these systems of representation is one of the central concerns of the novel's attempts to map the spaces of postcolonial India.

However, the novel demonstrates that the colonial system cannot simply be replaced by an essentially Indian system of knowledge. Rushdie uses Saleem's childhood home, the Methwold Estate, to illustrate the continuing influence of colonial relations on the production of postcolonial spaces. As the name suggests,

this estate is owned by William Methwold, an Englishman who sells his properties to Indian families before his departure from Bombay on the eve of Independence. Despite the initial distress felt by many residents at the English way of life the villas encapsulate, the narrator observes, 'the sharp edges of things are getting blurred, so they have all failed to notice what is happening: the Estate, Methwold's Estate, is changing them' (p. 99). Saleem's family and their neighbours begin to familiarise themselves with the British-style fittings in their homes and continue to observe the cocktail hour so typical of British rule overseas. Eventually it is even revealed that Saleem's biological father is none other than Methwold himself. Given Saleem's status as 'mirror of the nation,' there is a clear implication that India itself is a hybrid state (p. 427). Rushdie's fiction does not suggest that hybridity is restricted to the postcolonial nation; in *The Satanic Verses* and *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, for example, he examines the development of equally hybrid nations in the West. However, in stressing the continuing influence of imperialist structures on the microcosm of the Methwold Estate and, by extension, India, Rushdie confronts the difficulties inherent in any attempt to represent specifically postcolonial spaces from within a dominant system of representation which retains imperialist and racist associations.

An issue with which Rushdie must contend in his mapping of postcolonial spaces is his use of English, the former colonial language. In an essay published in 1982 he writes:

Those of us who do use English do so in spite of our ambiguity towards it, or perhaps because of that, perhaps because we can find in that linguistic struggle a reflection of other struggles taking place in the real world, struggles between the cultures within ourselves and the influences at work on our societies.¹⁰

Similarly, Aruna Srivastava notes that the imagined dialogues of Rushdie's work would be conducted in Urdu and other subcontinental languages, despite being rendered in English, and that this realisation 'constantly and consistently jolts its readers into an awareness of their ethno- and linguo-centrism'.¹¹ The self-conscious use of English can serve to heighten the reader's awareness of the extent to which the language of fiction constructs the reality of the spaces it represents. However, the use of the colonial language also alters the representations that the novel can convey. The narrator of *Shame* refers to this process in outlining the novel's central concept:

This word: shame. No, I must write it in its original form, not in this peculiar language tainted by wrong concepts and the accumulated detritus of its owners' unrepented past, this Angrezi in which I am forced to write, and so forever alter what is written...

Sharam, that's the word. For which this paltry 'shame' is a wholly inadequate translation.¹²

This emphasises the process of displacement undergone by the formerly colonised subject, in which 'wrong concepts' apply in a society which has not evolved together with the language. These concepts are part of the process by which the colonising power has used language to define the dominated culture and so map an environment which is alien to the native culture.

Yet, in using English, Rushdie suggests that this is not simply a one-way process: by incorporating the name 'Angrezi' the narrator conveys that the postcolonial subject can also map an environment different to that of the dominant culture. Postcolonial societies are changing a language which is now theirs as much as the English-speaking West's. Aijaz Ahmad writes, 'English is simply one of India's own languages now,' highlighting how writers such as Rushdie 'have altered

the traditional map of English fiction beyond recognition'.¹³ Rushdie's incorporation of recognisably non-English phrases into English sentences is a consistent feature of his style, appropriating even stock phrases and making them unfamiliar to the Western reader. A character in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, for example, declares, 'there was not only this bowl of carrot-*halva* but a big *bumboo*-stick as well'.¹⁴ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak describes the self-conscious use of English as 'this hyper-real scramble for identity on the move' and Rushdie's literary experimentation demonstrates the extent to which hybrid linguistic forms can not only reflect but create new representations of postcolonial spaces.¹⁵ A conclusion expressed in both Rushdie's novels and his non-fiction is that this hybrid language – and by extension, a hybrid identity – is something to be considered positive. In a passage from *Imaginary Homelands* that appears almost verbatim in the narrative of *Shame*, Rushdie writes, 'having been borne across the world, we are translated men. It is normally supposed that something always gets lost in translation; I cling, obstinately, to the notion that something can also be gained'.¹⁶ In this way he rejects claims that postcolonial representations must be 'authentic' and based on a pre-colonial identity.

Rushdie's approach is consistent with the denial of the 'myth of authenticity' described by Gareth Griffiths. Griffiths suggests that a hybrid, postcolonial dialogue 'is not (as colonial texts suggest) between the pure and the tainted, or (as the white myth of the authentic suggests) between the tainted and the recovered pure, but between two orders of the impure'.¹⁷ Rushdie's novels reject claims that postcolonial nations should be mapped through 'authentic' means based on a pre-colonial identity. The narrator of *Shame* addresses potential criticisms of his 'inauthenticity' thus:

*Outsider! Trespasser! You have no right to this subject!...I know: nobody ever arrested me. Nor are they ever likely to. Poacher! Pirate! We reject your authority. We know you, with your foreign language wrapped around you like a flag: speaking about us in your forked tongue, what can you tell but lies?*¹⁸

However, he counters such criticisms by arguing that authentic expression is inherently problematic, asking 'Can only the dead speak?'.¹⁹ The narrator reports that the Pakistani poet friend whose experiences he is referring to here is so traumatised by being tortured in prison that he is unable to discuss what happened. This is a more contemporary take on Spivak's assertion that 'the subaltern cannot speak,' wherein it proves impossible for others to represent the experience of the oppressed.²⁰ In denying the possibility of truly authentic expression, Rushdie resigns his novels and his readers to a fictional map of the subcontinent which acknowledges its own partial and incomplete nature.

Opinion has been divided as to whether Rushdie's dismissal of authentic maps of the subcontinent is compatible with his stated aim of political resistance. Responses to Rushdie's work have linked this stance, compatible with Western poststructuralist thought, with his status as a migrant intellectual, from a privileged class and well-established in the West. Tariq Ali's 1982 review of *Midnight's Children* states 'Rushdie, writing from the outside (as he himself explains), has been able to recreate his subject only partially. This has meant that many extremely rich aspects of the sub-continent's culture and politics are absent'.²¹ Ali continues, suggesting that poetry and the suffering of poets in the subcontinent are examples of the type of cultural input that is missing in Rushdie's fiction and it is, therefore, tempting to read the narrator's evocation of the poet friend in *Shame* as a response to

Ali's suggestion. Rushdie's narratives suggest, in response to this type of criticism, that there can be no single 'authentic' voice which represents India or Pakistan.

Indeed, Rushdie's novels depict the dangers of assuming a particular representation of the Indian or Pakistani nations is authentic and therefore definitive. Rushdie describes his depiction of India in *Midnight's Children* as an 'imaginative map' of the newly created postcolonial nation.²² These maps are never politically neutral and support his belief that 'description is itself a political act'.²³ *Midnight's Children* offers a representation of India which challenges the dominant conceptions of colonial space, yet continues to problematise the depiction of the resistant spaces of the postcolonial nation.

Partitioning Space

Each new form of state, each new form of political power, introduces its own particular way of partitioning space, its own particular administrative classification of discourses about space and about things and people in space. Each such form commands space, as it were, to serve its purposes; and the fact that space should thus become *classificatory* makes it possible for a certain type of non-critical thought simply to register the resultant "reality" and accept it at face value.²⁴

Henri Lefebvre highlights a central consequence of the social production of spaces by stressing that not only do certain representations of spaces become dominant in a particular society, but that these discourses of space create an illusion that they are the only possible 'reality' of that environment. *Midnight's Children* investigates the creation of dominant discourses of space, on the basis that 'there is a genuine need for political fiction, for books that draw new and better maps of reality, and make new languages with which we can understand the world'.²⁵ This section analyses the

classifying of spaces in the new nations of the Indian subcontinent and the violence that arises from conflicting representations of these spaces.

Independence from British imperial rule brings the Partition of the subcontinent into India and the new Muslim nation of Pakistan. Partition is a very clear manifestation of the social production of space. The subcontinent was united only as a colonial dependency, which retained relatively independent states, and the political manoeuvres of Independence create two entirely new entities. The novel's story of postcolonial India begins with an act of colonialist mapmaking, with the plans for Partition overseen by the British Earl Mountbatten, with 'his soldier's knife that could cut subcontinents in three' (*Midnight's Children*, p. 65). Mountbatten's actions have enormous consequences for the spatial organisation of both India and Pakistan.

Saleem suggests:

a nation that had never previously existed was about to win its freedom, catapulting us into a world which, although it had five thousand years of history, although it had invented the game of chess and traded with Middle Kingdom Egypt, was nevertheless quite imaginary. (p. 112)

Benedict Anderson describes the development of nation states as imagined communities. These are '*imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'.²⁶ India is based on such an imagined community, with its sheer size making its lack of essential unity all the more apparent. Anderson argues that nations are imagined as communities, 'because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship'.²⁷ Anderson posits a

bond which persuades people to fight and even die for this imaginary space, yet, as his references to inequality and exploitation suggest, it cannot be assumed that all citizens share this ideal of community. Saleem notes that this is particularly true of India, with its huge and heterogeneous population. The country:

would never exist except by the effects of a phenomenal collective will – except in a dream we all agreed to dream; it was a mass fantasy shared in varying degrees by Bengali and Punjabi, Madrasi and Jat, and would periodically need the sanctification and renewal which can only be provided by rituals of blood. (*Midnight's Children*, p. 112)

The imagined space of India does become a real entity, as social relations produce a space of this collective will. Nonetheless, Saleem's comment highlights the extent to which India is also produced as a site of conflict between social groups.

These conflicts are very much apparent in the partitioning of India and Pakistan. The subcontinent is characterised by its huge variety of ethnic groups, languages and faiths, yet Pakistan is created as a specifically Muslim state. Throughout *Midnight's Children*, members of Saleem's Muslim family sell their properties in India to move to Pakistan, and Saleem himself is taken to live there, against his will, at the age of fourteen. The partitioning of the subcontinent turns a space which is populated by people of a range of faiths into spaces which are defined increasingly through one religion, and as Muslims Saleem's family become progressively more alienated from their Indian homeland. Saleem is disorientated by this change in nationality, describing the 'detachment that came to afflict us all,' which is 'a reminder of the family's separateness from both India and Pakistan' (p. 329). Partitions, both national and regional, are portrayed in this way throughout Rushdie's work. The narrator of *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* insists that 'you can't

just keep dividing and slicing – India-Pakistan, Maharashtra-Gujarat – without the effects being felt at the level of the family unit, the loving couple, the living soul’.²⁸ Each of the characters is unable to identify fully with either country. Saleem is unhappy in Pakistan, which he cannot accept as home, while India is increasingly represented as a Hindu state, excluding him and the millions of other Muslims who were raised there.

Neither homogenous and clearly distinguished citizens, nor undisputed territories can define India or Pakistan definitively, and the social conflicts between and within the states leads to war. The disputed territory of Kashmir, which is represented as Pakistani by one nation and Indian by the other, becomes a focal point of this conflict. This space is both socially defined by contrasting representations and produced as a space of war as social conflicts become spatial. As Lefebvre argues, ‘spatial contradictions “express” conflicts between socio-political interests and forces; it is only *in* space that such conflicts come effectively into play, and in so doing they become contradictions *of* space’.²⁹ War occurs as two conflicting representations of space struggle for dominance, yet Saleem’s analysis of the governments’ war reports challenges both. India and Pakistan release contradictory information, which none of their citizens can decode:

Important to concentrate on good hard facts. But which facts? One week before my eighteenth birthday, on August 8th, did Pakistani troops in civilian clothing cross the cease-fire line in Kashmir and infiltrate the Indian sector, or did they not? (*Midnight’s Children*, p. 338)

The war accrues many casualties, both military and civilian, and fails to resolve the conflict: ‘India had occupied less than 500 square miles of Pakistani soil; Pakistan had conquered just 340 square miles of its Kashmiri dream’ (p. 344). Rushdie’s

narrative challenges the dominant discourse of the governments of both India and Pakistan by highlighting both their futility and the impossibility of distinguishing between the two.

Further spatial conflict erupts in the next section of Saleem's narrative, this time between the East and the West wings of Pakistan as the latter secedes to become Bangladesh. Again Rushdie links spatial division to the fragmenting of individuals, writing of 'the fear of schizophrenia, of splitting, that was buried like an umbilical cord in every Pakistani heart' (p. 351). The proposed split challenges the dominant representation of the two wings of Pakistan as a homogenous Muslim nation:

Religion was the glue of Pakistan, holding the halves together; just as consciousness, the awareness of oneself as a homogenous entity in time, a blend of past and present, is the glue of personality, holding together our then and our now. (p. 351)

Defining the nation through faith is especially important in differentiating it from India, and Pakistani troops characterise their enemy by their religion: 'What weaklings, yara, those Hindus! Vegetarians all!' (p. 347). The troops' convictions are later challenged as not only is the Indian army composed of various religious groups, but their eventual targets are Bangladeshi Muslims. The horrific events of the war challenge the conception of space held by the young troops who accompany Saleem, who are drawn into a space of surreal fantasy they believe to be the Sundarbans jungle, in which time operates strangely and the natural order disintegrates, with the men becoming food for leeches. Throughout its depiction of the wars between and within Pakistan and India, *Midnight's Children* both highlights the constructed nature of the warring factions' dominant representations of space, and the very real effects this conflict has on the spaces' inhabitants.

The narrative refuses to adjudicate between conflicting representations of Kashmir or Bengal due to its conviction that there is no 'original' conception of the nation that can then be mapped. As Saleem suggests, 'as many versions of India as there are Indians' (p. 269). Nonetheless, some of these versions will inevitably become dominant in asserting a certain knowledge of the nation and power relations will function accordingly. The final spatial conflict depicted by Saleem is over the nation of India during the mid-1970s, when the democratic country is declared in a State of Emergency by the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. Saleem envisages this conflict as one between himself, as the 'mirror of the nation,' and the Prime Minister, whose campaign slogan, 'Indira is India and India is Indira,' identifies her with the nation (p. 427). While Saleem once again invests himself with a ludicrous centrality in his conception of India, his opinion is accurate as far as it recognises the political battle as one to establish a dominant representation of the space of India. Saleem is living in a slum in Delhi with a group of magicians, a space which becomes a site of conflicting representations as 'beautification' programmes are introduced in the city. This conflict pits the slums as a site of the homes of the poor, in need of economic development, against their characterisation as eyesores to the wealthy. The dominant representation wins out, and the slum is demolished, killing many of its inhabitants.

Events such as these demonstrate the production of spaces through social relations, and the violent political consequences of the assertion of a dominant representation of space. In highlighting the construction of dominant maps of space, Rushdie's novels challenge them and present alternative fictional maps of India and Pakistan. These fictional maps offer resistance, according to Rushdie's principle that 'redescribing the world is the necessary first step towards changing it'.³⁰ The next

section analyses whether the fictional maps of *Midnight's Children* encounter similar issues to the theoretical processes outlined earlier.

Mapping Resistance

1001, the number of night, of magic, of alternative realities - a number beloved of poets and detested by politicians, for whom all alternative versions of the world are threats. (*Midnight's Children*, p. 217)

Saleem celebrates the 1001 magical *Midnight's Children*, each of whom is born in the first hour of India's independence and is possessed of magical gifts. For Saleem, the alternate versions of the world that the children provide are political acts, which resist the dominant power relations in Indian society. Despite his comically overblown sense of his own importance in determining the fate of the nation, Saleem is indeed 'handcuffed to history,' with his fate inexorably bound up with India's (p. 9). *Midnight's Children* is a narrative in which not only are social relations and the spaces of India mutually constitutive, but in which dominant discourses continually threaten and eventually overwhelm the alternative versions of Indian reality that Saleem produces. Whether Rushdie's narrative can provide an alternative fictional map which resists the dominant discourses of space is the focus of this section.

Throughout Rushdie's novels, the individual body is used to depict allegorically the fate of the environment which it inhabits and *Midnight's Children's* central conceit is the embodying of India in the narrator, Saleem Sinai. Saleem's body cannot be differentiated from the way in which it is moulded by the dominant system in his environment. The manifestation of the links between place and body are initially relatively comic, with the partition of the subcontinent reflected by the

loss of a finger-tip and some hair, and birthmarks which ensure Saleem even resembles the shape of India on a map. However, far more serious events impact on the individual as the novel progresses, until Saleem's eventual physical and mental collapse mirrors the quashing of India's hopes for peace after gaining independence. Rushdie's allegorical use of his narrator has several consequences for the novel's portrayal of India.

Rushdie highlights the extent to which social forces shape Saleem's existence and, given his allegorical role as representative of the nation, the spaces of India. Enacting political events quite literally on the body posits an individual who is produced by power relations. Rushdie is explicit regarding the role of politics in his work:

we are all irradiated by history, we are radioactive with history and politics; we see that it can be as false to create a politics-free fictional universe as to create one in which nobody needs to work or eat or hate or love or sleep.³¹

Such language is consistent with Foucault's theories of bio-power in which the body 'is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a disassociated Self (adopting the illusion of substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration'.³² *Midnight's Children* can easily be read as fulfilling the task set by Foucault, 'to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body'.³³ Saleem's body represents an India both produced and destroyed by social conflicts, with his physical disintegration mirroring conflicts over Indian sites.

Saleem's collapse can therefore be read as the failure of resistant maps of Indian spaces. *Midnight's Children* ends with the survival of Saleem's son, Aadam,

and suggestions that he represents a new generation of Indians. However, his reappearance as the odious Adam Zogoiby in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, Rushdie's most pessimistic book, dashes any hopes raised by Aadam. In depicting the strength of a dominant worldview, Rushdie risks what Jameson describes as the 'winner loses' logic which paralyses the critical capacity of a work that attempts to represent the totality of the dominant.³⁴ Nonetheless, Jameson's admission that 'counterforces and new tendencies' continue to exist within the most dominant system is also applicable to Rushdie's novel.³⁵ It is important to distinguish the consequences of events for the characters in the book from the impact of the novel as a whole. While *Midnight's Children* fictionalises an experience in which critique is paralysed, the novel as a whole continues to escape totalisation through its capacity for regeneration. Rushdie states, in *Imaginary Homelands*:

What I tried to do was set up a tension in the text, a paradoxical opposition between the form and content of the narrative. The story of Saleem does indeed lead him to despair. But the story is told in a manner designed to echo, as closely as my abilities allowed, the Indian talent for non-stop self-regeneration. This is why the narrative constantly throws up new stories, why it "teems". The form – multitudinous, hinting at the infinite possibilities of the country – is the optimistic counterweight to Saleem's personal tragedy.³⁶

Rushdie's novel cannot articulate alternatives which would change Saleem's fate or India's within the time-frame of the novel. Nonetheless, *Midnight's Children* documents counter-forces which could be developed to create resistant spaces. Strategies of resistance such as those adopted by Saleem against a dominant worldview, bring forth unpredictable and often ambivalent results. Foucault assumes that power relations inevitably exist alongside resistance to these relations, yet that

they are always plural and unpredictable.³⁷ It is on this basis that I read Rushdie's refusal to provide a single alternative worldview in *Midnight's Children*.

Rushdie presents an environment in which spaces are produced by the normalising of certain knowledges. Thus, the knowledge that a son is preferable to a daughter makes his childhood home a privileged space for Saleem, while the knowledge that Kashmir belongs to India or Pakistan produces the region as a space of war. Throughout the novel, knowledges are shown to conflict and are continually subject to challenge. Consequently, readings such as Richard Cronin's, which distinguish between power and knowledge miss the central point regarding the complexities of knowledges and their representation in the novel. Cronin argues that '*Midnight's Children* imagines a world where knowledge and power are forever opposed,' concluding: 'Saleem has knowledge without power, Shiva has power without knowledge'.³⁸ However, the narrative suggests that the real problem in effecting resistance is the impossibility of asserting one example of knowledge as final. Comparing India and Pakistan's conflicting propaganda reports during the 1965 war between the countries, Saleem asks, 'but did it or didn't it? Was that how it happened? Or was All-India Radio – *great tank battle, huge Pak losses, 450 tanks destroyed* – telling the truth?'. The reports are clearly erroneous, yet the truth of the situation will continue to elude the listener, and Saleem concludes, 'Nothing was real; nothing certain' (*Midnight's Children*, p. 340). Similarly, the publication of dubious election results in Pakistan leaves him, 'adrift, disorientated, amid an equally infinite number of falsenesses, unrealities and lies' (p. 326). Saleem's problem is not simply that he lacks power but that he is unable to establish an alternative knowledge

which can realistically take account of events, as the errors within his own narrative demonstrate.

Saleem is therefore unable to provide fictional maps of an environment which, as Jameson suggests, transcends 'the capacities of the individual human body to locate itself, to organise its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world'.³⁹ Jameson's argument that this is politically crippling is borne out by Saleem's failure to resist and his eventual disintegration. *Midnight's Children's* metafictional narrative precludes the novel from offering a straightforward alternative to the dominant worldview that it criticises. Not all critics have appreciated the refusal of Rushdie's narratives to offer alternative representations of subcontinental spaces which cannot equally be challenged. Fawzia Afzal-Khan argues that Rushdie's approach counteracts his apparent political critique, writing, 'Rushdie's refusal to "mythologise" history in his books [...] must ultimately be seen as a failure to construct a viable alternative ideology for himself or for postcolonial society in general'.⁴⁰ However, while Saleem is himself destroyed and the survival of India threatened, his alternate narrative of the nation remains.

Much criticism of the potential for resistant maps of India in *Midnight's Children* results from Rushdie's use of metafictional techniques which question the authority of Saleem's narrative.⁴¹ Nonetheless, Rushdie's refusal to set up a valid alternative to the system he depicts need not lessen the capacity of his novel for critique, as a comparison with the debate between Jameson and Hutcheon on postmodern fiction demonstrates. Jameson does not refer to Rushdie's work, and it is not clear whether or not the novels would be considered in his schema as 'third

world' works, of which he is less critical than of their Western counterparts.⁴² Nonetheless, *Midnight's Children* confirms the continuing ability of postmodern fiction to engage in political discussion through the explicit problematising of representation. As Hutcheon writes, such postmodern fiction 'cannot be accused of neglecting or refusing engagement with the issues of historical representation and knowledge'.⁴³ Rushdie's problematising of expression does not deny the lived experience of events equivalent to those he describes, but highlights the risk of simply imposing a different yet equally partial dominant worldview. My reading of Jameson argued that his position on the political commitment of postmodern fiction is closer to Hutcheon's than either admits, due to his admiration of novels, such as *Ragtime*, which confront the problems of representation. Works such as *Midnight's Children*, in which 'the representational dilemma is inscribed in the text and thereby acknowledged, rather than repressed or resolved,' highlight the concerns that Jameson himself finds central.⁴⁴

However, just as Jameson's use of cognitive mapping to read, for example, third world writing, can be challenged on account of his own conceived cultural centrality, Rushdie's fictional maps also face problems of legitimation. As Rufus Cook asserts in his discussion of the contrast between the official knowledge of the Emergency and Saleem's alternative:

Surely either of these descriptions implies a distinction of some sort in the truth or adequacy or coherence of different "versions." Surely it implies some standard of reference, independent of any particular "version" by which its adequacy or truth could be determined.⁴⁵

Midnight's Children may question the accuracy of its own narrative, yet it continues to invite the reader to prefer its version to that of official knowledge. Similarly, by

using mapping strategies to redescribe the world in order to change it, Rushdie suggests that the alternative maps he provides are preferable to the dominant maps he challenges. In encouraging the writing of political fictions, Rushdie is, of course, speaking of those which challenge the dominant knowledges he perceives as harmful. In so doing, however, he continues to encounter the problem faced by oppositional critics such as Jameson: of how to legitimate criticisms of dominant representations without leaving one's own version equally subject to criticism.

Mapping can only be achieved through a form of representational medium, and Rushdie's fictional spaces are inevitably filtered through a process of representation. One consequence of using mapping strategies to mediate resistance is the inevitable difference between territory and text. Saleem's India is depicted using clear spatial and historical markers, yet the inclusion of factual errors regarding the nation's definitive historical events highlights this difference. *Shame* is still more ambivalent as the narrator states:

The country in this story is not Pakistan, or not quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same space, or almost the same space. My story, my fictional country exist, like myself, at a slight angle to reality.⁴⁶

In order to be considered a fictional map of Pakistan, and a political fiction, the text must exist in some relation to the actual country. Sara Suleri finds that the tension between the desire to represent this space and the inability of the narrative to do so, 'becomes paradigmatic of the casualties frequently accrued by contemporary postcolonial writing'.⁴⁷ In keeping with theorists who advocate mapping strategies, Rushdie cannot establish a form of mapping spaces which is not subject to the same criticisms as the dominant representations he challenges.

A second issue arising from the use of mapping strategies is the role of the mapmaker, and this is foregrounded by Rushdie's first-person, self-reflexive narratives. Timothy Brennan questions whether the locating of India's post-1947 traumas and failures in an individual consciousness lessens the potential for critique through accepting the inevitability of human flaws.⁴⁸ However, this point can be countered with the observation that, as Kathleen Flanagan suggests, the metafictional connection of self and state that is so central to *Midnight's Children* also functions as an ironic reminder that the terrible deeds of the narrative are perpetrated by real human beings in the world.⁴⁹ This theme is returned to in later novels, including *The Moor's Last Sigh*, in which Moor refuses to differentiate humans from the evil deeds they commit. He concludes:

they are not inhuman, these Mainduck-style little Hitlers, and it is in their humanity that we must locate our collective guilt, humanity's guilt for human beings' misdeeds; for if they are just monsters - if it is just a question of King Kong and Godzilla wreaking havoc until the aeroplanes bring them down - then the rest of us are excused.⁵⁰

Moor's refusal to exempt himself from responsibility for the events of the novel is simply a more balanced version of Saleem's overblown assumption of historical centrality, which avoids the megalomaniac tendency of the former narrator whilst retaining and widening the liability of 'humanity's guilt for human beings' misdeeds'. However, the close relationship between mapped spaces and the narrative of the individual in Rushdie's novels also serves as a reminder of the subjective agency of the individual mapmaker, an admission which has continuing implications for the politics of representation throughout the novels.

The narrator of *Shame* states, 'now I must stop saying what I am not writing about, because there's nothing so special about that; every story one chooses to tell is a kind of censorship, it prevents the telling of other tales'.⁵¹ Suleri identifies this position with the central, unresolved problem of the novel, writing, 'the narrative does not merely record what once has been done: instead, it is horrified at its own powers of replication, its knowledge that it can also oppress'.⁵² This problem becomes more significant when applied to *Midnight's Children*, on account of its identification, however ironic, between the body of the narrator and the space of the nation. Saleem is both mapmaker and map, and it is by no means certain that he can himself avoid the representational pitfalls that he demonstrates challenge dominant maps of Indian spaces.

Kathryn Hume argues that Saleem's autobiographical writing is the means by which he resists the political events which otherwise overwhelm him, writing, 'as historian and artist, he regains his subject status'.⁵³ Yet, as she also notes, the unreliability of his narrative raises questions over his depiction of other characters, notably Padma and Shiva, against whom he defines himself. Gender and class positioning are key in allowing Saleem to occupy many of the spaces that he does in the novel, despite his experiences of oppression. Revati Krishnaswamy argues that a narrative such as *Midnight's Children* is based on 'a de-territorialized consciousness freed from such collectivities as race, class, gender, or nation, an unattached imagination that conveniently can become cosmopolitan and subaltern, alternately or simultaneously'.⁵⁴ To suggest that Rushdie's work is 'de-territorialized' seems unfair, given its continuing interrogations of postcolonial spaces. Moreover, Krishnaswamy's argument does not take account of the fact that, as Elleke Boehmer

writes, 'it is not necessarily the case, for example, that the cosmopolitan should be apolitical'.⁵⁵ However, that Rushdie's work is at times insensitive to collectivities such as class and gender in particular is undeniable. Krishnaswamy's point emphasises the extent to which it is only the cosmopolitan writer who is free to assimilate traits associated with the subaltern, which is then presented as a background against which a privileged consciousness such as Saleem's can define itself using figures such as Padma, the presumed direct audience of Saleem's life-story, and an illiterate and lower-class woman with whom he also spends his nights.

Saleem's privileged background as a middle class male brings about a narrative focus on the equally privileged spaces such an individual would typically inhabit. Saleem grows up in a spacious villa in an attractive area of Bombay, and returns to the city by the end of the novel to become a successful entrepreneur. During his time in the magicians' ghetto, the narrative is concerned mainly with the Delhi slum's destruction. Little in the way of resistant mapping is offered to other characters such as Saleem's wife, Parvati, who is killed in the demolition of the slum. Saleem reports that some of the magicians survived, and that 'it is said that the day after the bulldozing of the magicians' ghetto, a new slum was reported in the heart of the city' (*Midnight's Children*, p. 431). Bulldozers fail to find the slum, which then reappears in other parts of the city: 'the existence of the moving slum of the escaped illusionists became a fact known to all the inhabitants of the city, but the wreckers never found it' (p. 431). The narrative hereby acknowledges what Lefebvre would term a representational space, or a space of resistance, but moves on to other aspects of the story rather than continue to map it.

While *Midnight's Children* does not represent the voices of more subaltern citizens of India, it does produce a narrative which acknowledges its own partiality. Saleem's narrative explicitly sidelines other characters, notably Shiva, the other 'midnight's child' born at the same moment as Saleem but brought up in a lower class family. Despite his equal claim to be 'the mirror of the nation,' and his central role in crucial events of the novel, the less privileged spaces he inhabits are not explored. As Saleem's resentful double, he reflects the new India in a manner which reflects the god he is named after, as creator and destroyer. Shiva both facilitates the rounding up and castrating of the magical midnight children and produces the next generation of Indians by fathering, among others, Saleem's adopted son, Aadam. Saleem acknowledges the absence of Shiva's view when he admits inventing his rival's death (p. 443). However, the novel maintains an ambivalent position in continuing to use Saleem's narrative as the 'mirror' of India, relying on his gender and class positioning to facilitate movement between the various subcontinental spaces he occupies in order to represent as much of the landmass as possible. This is rarely acknowledged in the novel, with only the absence of representations of subaltern spaces, such as Shiva's poverty-stricken home, drawing attention to Saleem's occupation of privileged spaces. Similarly, scenes such as the withdrawal of Saleem's previously boisterous sister behind the veil required to preserve her modesty as a singer in Pakistan, and perhaps into the hidden space of a convent as she escapes the Pakistani government who previously promoted her, remind the reader both of the differing access to spaces that individuals experience and of the inability of any narrative to map all spaces.

Of course, to expect Rushdie's novels to map all the spaces of India is to mistake its role as a novel. Rushdie himself attests that many of the book's early readers wanted *Midnight's Children* 'to be the history, even the guidebook, which it was never meant to be'. Such readers, he notes, 'were judging the book not as a novel, but as some sort of inadequate reference book or encyclopaedia'.⁵⁶ Nonetheless, Saleem's narrative continues to attempt to map the totality of Indian experience. He describes the futile attempts of a character, Lifafa Das, to include images of the whole world in his picture-postcard show before wondering if he is suffering a similar compulsion in his narrative (p. 75). In an interview, Rushdie even refers to *Midnight's Children* as an 'attempt to be a kind of total fiction,' referring presumably to his character's experience rather than an all-encompassing representation of India.⁵⁷

Rushdie's fictional maps operate in a similar manner to Jameson's cognitive mapping in this respect. Stephen Baker suggests that the intertextual linking of character and style in Rushdie's novels, 'alludes to, but never quite produces, that goal of totality which is the bedrock of Lukacsian ideas of Realism'.⁵⁸ While agreeing entirely with this point, I argue that the desire to map the totality found in Rushdie's novels is consistent with my reworking of Jameson's themes. In Jameson's terms, the totality remains unrepresentable, a fact which the narratives readily acknowledge, yet strive to change nonetheless, much as Jameson does in his own work. Jameson reads dialectically in order to confront the impossible position of representing the unrepresentable and this is mirrored by both the ambiguity and the continually transforming nature of Rushdie's narratives.

The extent to which Jameson's work must respond to revision of his 'total and global claims,' is also reflected in *Midnight's Children*.⁵⁹ Saleem's narrative invites, however reluctantly, the inevitable re-readings that will result: 'The process of revision should be constant and endless; don't think I'm satisfied with what I've done!' (p. 460). Rather than Lifafa Das, therefore, it may be that the artist Aurora, a central character in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, is a more suitable model for Rushdie's narrators. Aurora apparently succeeds in capturing the whole of India in a painting which commemorates her mother's death.⁶⁰ However, Aurora is a teenager at this point, and this painting is only the first of forty years of work. In short, any attempt to map the totality is a process which can never be completed. However, as in Jameson's work, the tensions between the necessity of mapping spatial conflicts and the problematising of representational strategies presupposed by postmodern narrative are never resolved in Rushdie's fictional maps. In contrast, Rushdie's narrative techniques ensure that such tensions are the explicit focus of his fictional maps.

Midnight's Children therefore exemplifies the process Jameson observes in his cognitive mapping of *The Parallax View*, in which 'the very problem of representability now becomes in some sense its own solution – the thing being done, as it were, by showing it cannot be done in the first place'.⁶¹ Rushdie foregrounds the turmoil of the subcontinent as a series of conflicting representations of space, highlighting the problems of representing resistance with which his work continues to struggle, but refuses to solve. This process also occurs in his depiction of the postmodern city spaces of Bombay.

Bombay in Reality and Metaphor

The city as reality and as metaphor is at the heart of all my work.⁶²

Rushdie's declared love for the metropolis is reinforced by his fiction which, despite its magical elements, tends to remain firmly in the urban environment. My analysis focuses on Rushdie's depiction of the spaces of Bombay as they are produced by its social relations. The aim of this analysis is not to evaluate the relationship of Rushdie's depiction of the city to the lived realities of its many citizens, but, rather, to provide a reading of how this depiction can be read as a means, however factually flawed, of mapping the environment. Bombay plays a central role in three of Rushdie's novels: *Midnight's Children* and *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* portray the city from the 1940s to the 1960s, while *The Moor's Last Sigh* updates the city's history into the 1990s. This section outlines the ways in which Bombay is mapped in these three novels.

Many of the novels include detailed descriptions of Bombay life in the middle of the twentieth century, including accurate place-names and cultural references, which, as Roshan G. Shahani suggests in her reading of Bombay literature, 'root them firmly in the physical and geographical realities of Bombay'.⁶³ A short summary of the city's development is therefore useful in highlighting the points to which Rushdie returns. The site of what is now the city of Bombay was originally home to a small group of fishermen and women, known as the Koli.⁶⁴ Their descendants continue to live in the city, among the most deprived and marginalised groups. Bombay differs from other Indian centres of population, such as Delhi, on account of its rapid and relatively recent growth, prompted by the arrival of Portuguese then British colonialists, who made Bombay a primary link between

India and Europe. Originally a group of islands, the land which became Bombay was constructed through a process of land reclamation starting in the eighteenth century.

As the trading centre of India from before Independence, Bombay has long been a meeting place for different groups from both within and outside the country.

Alice Thorner writes:

The very essence of the city's cultural life, as indeed of its economy, is constituted by its openness to winds blowing from all directions, from across the seas and from the mainland of India; its availability as a meeting ground for diverse communities; its prime function as a place of exchange.⁶⁵

Bombay is the home of many different ethnic, linguistic and religious communities. However, in the last two decades, Bombay's status as a home for such diverse communities has come increasingly under threat. The pro-Hindu, Marathi-speaking group Shiv Sena have occupied positions of authority in the city, pursuing policies which discriminate against other groups in the city and the state of Maharashtra. The Shiv Sena are also responsible for officially renaming the city with the Marathi name Mumbai; I have followed Rushdie in continuing to use the name Bombay in the interests of clarity. Violence has broken out between Hindus and Muslims on many occasions, with the low point of the city's recent history coming in the sectarian riots of December 1992 and the bombings, thought to be the work of organised criminal groups, of January 1993, which together saw hundreds killed.⁶⁶

Contemporary Bombay is an industrial centre, which remains responsible for around half of India's foreign trade. The city is also the home of the famous 'Bollywood' film production, further enhancing its reputation as a glamorous and perhaps gaudy contemporary centre. Although living conditions for many in the city

are extremely poor, it is Bombay's relative prosperity that has attracted continuing waves of migrants attempting to escape the poverty of much of rural India. Migrancy is also characteristic of the city's middle-class inhabitants, who tend also to move to the city from elsewhere. Some of Asia's largest slums are found alongside prosperous modern developments. Each of these aspects of the city's character and development are portrayed in Rushdie's novels.

Rushdie's novels emphasise that Bombay is produced through its social relations. As a site of international trade during the colonial period and beyond, Bombay is characterised by the number of different cultures represented in the city. The narrator of *The Moor's Last Sigh* attributes Bombay's diversity to its historical status as an international port, making it a meeting point for the huge number of groups and individuals which pass through and shape it. Moor suggests:

Bombay was central, had been so from the moment of its creation: the bastard child of a Portuguese-English wedding, and yet the most Indian of Indian cities. In Bombay all Indias met and merged. In Bombay, too, all-India met what-was-not-India, what came across the black water to flow into our veins.⁶⁷

Moor raises a central feature of Rushdie's depictions of Bombay: the city's 'Indianness', which continues despite its role as the primary gateway between India and the West. As India is itself a huge and diverse nation, Bombay does not become less authentic through its wide influences, but represents the nation through its multiplicity. Part of this multiplicity is Western: 'Nor is the West absent from Bombay'.⁶⁸ *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* uses music to argue that this does not detract from the city's Indianness. A central character, Ormus, becomes an

international rock star who is accused of selling out his Bombay heritage. However, his music, it is suggested:

was not of the West, except in the sense that the West was in Bombay from the beginning, impure old Bombay where West, East, North and South had always been scrambled, like codes, like eggs, and so Westernness was a legitimate part of Ormus, a Bombay part, inseparable from the rest of him.⁶⁹

This lack of purity is a cause for celebration and, as Western music itself demonstrates through its roots in Africa and the Caribbean, and through the enormous popularity of Ormus's songs, the relationship works both ways. Bombay has developed through hybrid influences and it is diversity which becomes the 'authentic' measure of the city's character and the only basis on which its environments can be mapped.

As its roots in international trade suggest, Bombay has been shaped by the relations of global capital. Bombay's status as a capitalist centre highlights some of the more negative aspects of the city in relation to its migrant poor. Despite his love for his home city, Saleem characterises it as 'a bloodsucking lizard', writing, 'Our Bombay: it looks like a hand but it's really a mouth, always open, always hungry, swallowing food and talent from everywhere else in India. A glamorous leech, producing nothing except films bush-shirts fish' (*Midnight's Children*, pp. 125-6). The rapid growth of the city as a centre of international trade is depicted allegorically in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, with the novel's protagonist representing Bombay, just as Saleem embodies the nation. Moor ages at twice the speed of a normal human and while this accelerated ageing embodies that of India as a whole, it corresponds primarily to the development of Bombay:

Like the city itself, Bombay of my joys and sorrows, I mushroomed into a huge urbane sprawl of a fellow, I expanded without time for proper planning, without any pauses to learn from my experiences or my mistakes or my contemporaries, without any time for reflection. How then could I have turned out to be anything but a mess? (*The Moor's Last Sigh*, pp. 161-2)

Bombay's 'hotchpotch' identity inevitably includes the huge disparity between the wealthy and the poor.

The city's role in the global economy prompted land reclamation schemes and Bombay is shaped, quite literally, according to these social and political forces. As Norma Evenson writes in her analysis of the city's architecture, 'to speak of the built environment of Bombay, therefore, is to speak of the land itself'.⁷⁰ Fictionalised representations of land reclamation schemes occur in all three novels, and are developed to show the interplay of social relations on Bombay. In *Midnight's Children*, Dr Narlikar convinces Saleem's father to invest in his scheme to reclaim land through the immersion of concrete tetrapods in the sea. Narlikar's enthusiasm for the reclamation project is matched only by his horror of fertility, a fear which is compounded when he notices that the first, symbolic tetrapod has been transformed by a group of beggar-women into a site of Hindu puja, with the tetrapod itself representing the Shiva-lingam, the phallic symbol of the god of procreation. To Narlikar it seems as if 'all the old priapic forces of ancient, procreative India had been unleashed upon the beauty of sterile, twentieth-century concrete' (p. 176). That Narlikar is defeated by these forces, toppled along with his beloved concrete into the water by marchers unhappy with his protests, emphasises the continuing significance of a more traditional culture in Bombay. However, the land reclamation scheme is a great success under the direction of Narlikar's female heirs, demonstrating the extent

to which Bombay combines the cultures of the subcontinent with modern capitalist development. The city is characterised by its tendency towards radical, almost supernatural change and the continuing role of commerce in determining its physical shape.

Midnight's Children's tetrapods also serve another purpose in Rushdie's mapping of Bombay. Included in Rushdie's essay on the unreliable narration of the novel is the information that 'Concrete tetrapods have never been used in Bombay as part of any land reclamation scheme, but only to shore up and protect the sea wall along the Marine Drive promenade'.⁷¹ Such details will escape the majority of Rushdie's readers and will most likely be seen as unimportant by any who do recognise the intentional error. Nonetheless, such points highlight the extent to which the city appears as 'metaphor' in Rushdie's work and the consequences of this practice.⁷² Factually inaccurate information is used to give a metaphorical sense of the city's social relations, just as Saleem's depiction of India is formed by the sometimes erroneous details of memory. The use of such devices highlights that Rushdie's novels are also engaged in shaping a particular vision of Bombay.

A notable feature of Rushdie's work is the distinctive form of English used by many of the Bombay characters, which includes occasional expressions from Indian languages. Although his narratives do not make this explicit, the hybrid languages which he depicts are often aesthetic devices, rather than realist reflections of the hybrid languages of Bombay's citizens. Rachael Dwyer notes, in her study of the media in contemporary Bombay, that the characteristic speech patterns in Rushdie's work bear a strong resemblance to the language of popular Bollywood film magazines.⁷³ Yet, Dwyer explains, this language is only to be found in the media,

and is not used in the speech of Bombay citizens. I make this point not as a criticism of Rushdie's work, as it is clear that the novels are not intended to be read as realist representations, the idea of which is continually debunked by the self-conscious nature of the narrative. Rather, Rushdie's use of such hyperreal, yet instantly recognisable, language confirms the extent to which representations of space, such as those found in the Bombay media, construct the cultural identity of the city.

In drawing fictional maps of the city, Rushdie's narratives are necessarily subjective. Bombay is presented as the most cosmopolitan of India's cities through both the style and the content of the novels. One consequence of the mixed population of Bombay has been the continuing use of English, particularly among the middle classes. Noting the publication of a large number of English-language novels by Bombay writers, including Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry and Anita Desai, Shahani associates the use of English with the capturing of 'a particular aspect of Indian reality – its urban cosmopolitanism'.⁷⁴ This type of narrative tends to focus on middle class, city based experience and Rushdie acknowledges the partiality of fictional maps they can provide. A character in *The Satanic Verses* is dubious about the extent to which the privileged protagonist, Saladin, can represent the city, asking 'What do you know about Bombay? Your own city, only it never was'. She continues:

Did Shiv Sena elements come there to make communal trouble? Were your neighbours starving in the textile strike? Did Datta Samant stage a rally in front of your bungalows. How old were you when you met a trade unionist? How old the first time you got on a local train instead of a car with driver? That wasn't Bombay, darling, excuse me. That was Wonderland, Peristan, Never-Never, Oz.⁷⁵

However, despite the gaps in Saladin's knowledge, he does capture one aspect of the city's character. *Midnight's Children* shows Saleem's mother, Amina, losing the 'city eyes' which normally fail to see the extent of the city's poverty on a trip into the slums of Delhi. Once again, Rushdie's narratives do not foreground the subaltern voices of India, but his representations of Bombay highlight the extent to which his own narratives are only one possible representation.

Rural India is also largely absent from Rushdie's work. Shahani observes that city-centred writing is a departure from the earlier tendency to celebrate rural India as the true representative of the nation. Rushdie satirises this notion in his depiction of the real-life actress Nargis and her hugely successful film, *Mother India*, a primary example of this type of rural melodrama, in *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Nargis's belief that the 'realism' of Mother India is mocked – 'Courage of the masses is there, and also dams' – while the narrator notes that this 'super-slushy ode to the uncrushability of village India' is 'made by the most cynical urbanites in the world' (p. 137). Such images of rural India are imposed from outside, yet Rushdie's rare depictions of the rural environments of the subcontinent all participate in this process of mapping. The jungle territory of Bangladesh is the setting for surreal episodes which Saleem admits are factually impossible in *Midnight's Children*. The section reveals little about the jungle, concentrating instead on the disorientating effects of war on Saleem and his companions.

In *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, rural India appears marginalised by Bombay's more central status. Driving through a remote area, the narrator, Rai, writes:

The sheer unchartedness of rural India in its most profound depths never failed to amaze. You turned off the road on to the rural tracks and at once felt as the earth's early navigators must have done; like a Cabot or Magellan of the land.⁷⁶

This is, of course, a reflection of his own inability to map the space rather than a consequence of any such essential nature. No cartographer may have mapped these spaces, but the inhabitants of the area know it as well as any Bombay dweller knows the city. Village India, he observes, is presented as the 'real' India, 'a space of timelessness and gods, of moral certainties and natural laws, of the eternal fixities of caste and faith, gender and class, landowner and sharecropper and bonded labourer and serf'. Yet, as Rai points out, the 'real' is anything but 'solid, immutable, tangible'. Rather, he claims, 'the most obvious lesson of travelling between the city and the village, between the crowded street and the open field, was that reality shifted. Where the plates of different realities met there were shudders and rifts'.⁷⁷ Yet, Rai's final point that his arriving in the area brings together two potentially contradictory realities is an accurate portrayal of a situation in which two understandings of the world collide. Although the rural is largely absent from Rushdie's narratives, these references demonstrate that they escape the mapping strategies of his narrators.

The maps of Bombay drawn by the novels also remain partial and incomplete. Moor describes his 'inexhaustible Bombay of excesses' and highlights the extent to which the city continues to escape even the most thorough attempts at mapping its entirety (*The Moor's Last Sigh*, p. 193). Each of the novels links the changeable nature of the city with endless reinterpretation: Rai suggests that 'Bombay forgets its history with each sunset and rewrites itself anew with the coming of the dawn'.⁷⁸ The

city continues to escape his attempts to map through photography, despite his early decision to concentrate on the details of the city rather than larger aerial views in an attempt to 'show that a camera can see beyond the surface, beyond the trappings of the actual, and penetrate to its bloody flesh and heart'.⁷⁹ However, Rai's 'way of understanding the world' is continually thwarted by a city which 'seethed, gathered to stare, turned its back and didn't care. By showing me everything it told me nothing'. What he terms 'the city' is of course its inhabitants, and Rai is unable to establish the agency to determine meaning in Bombay through the refusal of its other inhabitants to release their own hold on the city and its possible interpretations. He cannot presume to tell their stories: 'There were whores, tightrope walkers, transsexuals, movie stars, cripples, billionaires, all of them exhibitionists, all of them obscure'. As such, the crowd remains 'unknowable' through the excess of information it provides: 'There was too much money, too much poverty, too much nakedness, too much disguise, too much anger, too much vermillion, too much purple. There were too many dashed hopes and narrowed minds. There was far, far too much light'.⁸⁰

Rushdie characterises the city as consisting of millions of possible narratives and an image of these stories as a city crowd is common in the novels. Saleem believes 'I have been a swallower of lives [...] Consumed multitudes are jostling and shoving inside me' (*Midnight's Children*, p. 9). Moor agrees, in *The Moor's Last Sigh*: 'in Bombay you live crushed in this crazy crowd, you are deafened by its blaring horns of plenty,' adding, 'your own story has to shove its way through the throngs' (p. 128). Rai describes Bombay as:

a metropolis of many narratives that converged briefly and then separated for ever, discovering their different dooms in that crowd of stories through which all of us, following our own destinies, had to push and shove to find our way through, or out.⁸¹

The repeated use of this image in novels written over a twenty year period highlights one of the central themes of Rushdie's work: Bombay *is* the stories of its millions of inhabitants, with no essentialist definition beyond the interplay of social relations. The sheer number of alternative representations makes the imposing of one version an impossibility, despite the attempts of each of the narrators to map this multiplicity as comprehensively as possible.

An analysis of Saleem's attempts to map Bombay in *Midnight's Children* demonstrates that the infinity of possible representations continues to escape his desire to encapsulate the city. *Midnight's Children's* Bombay is narrated as the creation of Saleem's memory, in which detailed descriptions of his past are self-consciously presented as such. Rushdie discusses his use of Bombay memories in the title chapter of *Imaginary Homelands*, in which he argues that his experiences as a migrant intellectual intensify the inevitable blurring of any memories of a place no longer inhabited by the writer.⁸² Saleem's final return to the city reminds him that the shops, advertising hoardings and streets of his boyhood no longer exist. Moreover, memory is unreliable, and it is likely that much of the Bombay represented in the novel never did exist in precisely the form recorded. Rushdie makes explicit the inaccuracies in Saleem's chronology in order to emphasise the subjectivity of the Bombay past recorded in the novel. Yet Saleem persists in setting down as much detail about his childhood in Bombay as he can. One reason can be found in his introduction to the Methwold Estate, his childhood home: 'we are entering my

kingdom now, coming into the heart of my childhood; a little lump has appeared in my throat' (p. 94). This middle-class house, in which Saleem lives as the favoured son, is one in which his perceived centrality is convincing. His attempts to set down his memories demonstrate his need to locate a self which can regain this degree of control; that Rushdie ensures the accuracy of these memories is continually called into question confirms the ambiguous pull of the need to position oneself on a fully comprehended map, while accepting the impossibility of ever actually doing so.

Leaving Bombay for the family's new home in Pakistan, the teenage Saleem symbolically brings his childhood to a close by burying a battered tin globe and the newspaper cutting and letter from Nehru that commemorate his birth. If this division between childhood and early adulthood, Bombay and Karachi, seems overly neat and absolute, then it can be read as yet another example of Saleem's need to define an ordered world. Similarly, he makes clear distinctions between Bombay and the cities of Pakistan, the 'Land of the Pure'. Rawalpindi is Saleem's first experience of a northern city, which he describes as a 'village', lacking both the heat and the colour of Bombay (p. 297). Pakistan is perceived as the arid setting for the beginning of 'the desert of my later years' (p. 301) in which Saleem is unable or unwilling to seek refuge in the 'barren certitudes' of the monotheistic state (p. 316). Rather, he claims he 'was forever tainted with Bombayness, his head was full of all sorts of religions apart from Allah's [...] and his body was to show a marked preference for the impure' (p. 316).

However, despite the clear contrasts between Bombay and the cities of Pakistan, the distinction is perhaps not as absolute as Saleem's narrative suggests. Parallels are drawn between Karachi and Saleem himself, in a similar manner to

those he draws with Bombay. Saleem's own negative self image is close to that of the Pakistani city: 'my new city seemed to possess an ugliness which eclipsed even my own; having grown too fast – its population had quadrupled since 1947 – it had acquired the misshapen lumpiness of a gigantic dwarf' (p. 307). Saleem himself, of course, grew prodigiously when young and is insistent on his own physical deformities. Moreover, despite its claims, Karachi is not so pure: Saleem is easily able to indulge in the seamier aspects of the city as, he claims, 'no city which locks women away is ever short of whores' (p. 318). As relations between India and Pakistan worsen, the narrative highlights the extent to which the propaganda and atrocities of both nations are eerily similar. Saleem notes, 'in the first five days of the war Voice of Pakistan announced the destruction of more aircraft than India had ever possessed; in eight days, All-India Radio massacred the Pakistan Army down to, and considerably beyond, the last man' (p. 339). As Saleem travels 'the night-streets of [Karachi], looking for death', it is Indian bombs which apparently succeed in killing his family (pp. 341-2). Pakistan only hides impurities which nonetheless continue to exist, while India can resort to despotism; both nations have their share of pluralities and absolutes. Saleem's own diagnosis refers to the variously positive and negative consequences of a multiple conception of reality:

maybe this was the difference between my Indian childhood and Pakistani adolescence - that in the first I was beset by an infinity of alternative realities, while in the second I was adrift, disorientated, amid an equally infinite number of falsenesses, unrealities and lies. (p. 326)

However, despite his efforts to map these states on to the countries of India and Pakistan, the similarities of the behaviour of the two nations demonstrates that the real difference between his 'Indian childhood and Pakistani adolescence' does not

reside in an essential nature of the cities he inhabits. Rather, the change occurs with his own transition from an apparently fixed childhood map of his environment, in which he can maintain an illusion of centrality, and his later realisation that essences cannot be captured in either environment.

Rushdie's novel demonstrates that even a narrative such as Saleem's, which focuses on Bombay's pluralism, can omit aspects of the city's character while giving the 'illusion of transparency' described by Lefebvre.⁸³ The spaces of Rushdie's novels continue to escape a single definition, even one which essentialises the plural character of Bombay. While the narrator of *Midnight's Children* attempts to map this definition of the city, *The Moor's Last Sigh* illustrates the continuing capacity of the city to be redefined and explores the political problems that this raises for mapping.

Incompatible Realities: *The Moor's Last Sigh*

'The modern city,' says a character in *The Satanic Verses*, 'is the *locus classicus* of incompatible realities.' Well, that turned out to be true. 'As long as they pass in the night, it's not so bad. But if they meet! It's uranium and plutonium, each makes the other decompose, boom.'⁸⁴

Rushdie's novels become increasingly concerned with the city of Bombay as a site of incompatible realities. These 'realities' are the conflicting representations of the city space which provide individuals or groups with cognitive maps of their environment. *The Moor's Last Sigh* depicts a city which is increasingly produced by the social relations of capitalism and religious tension. My analysis explores the ways in which the novel highlights the production of Bombay according to these increasingly dominant representations, before examining the narrative's attempts to provide fictional maps which challenge them.

The city as a site of conflicting representations of reality is a central theme of the novel. While *Midnight's Children* is notable for its depiction of the physical reality of the city through the filter of memory, the later novel is, as Catherine Cundy observes, 'a narrative played out largely behind closed doors'.⁸⁵ This lack of external detail may of course have roots in Rushdie's altered situation: Maya Jaggi notes that he was unable to travel to India at the time *The Moor's Last Sigh* was written.⁸⁶ However, of interest to this analysis is the narrative construction of Bombay through competing social forces rather than physical detail. Bombay becomes the site on which conflicting definitions of place are played out on both the city landscape and the bodies of its inhabitants.

Along with Rushdie's other novels, *The Moor's Last Sigh* characterises Bombay by its mixed population and the infinite number of representations that are possible. Moor observes, 'what was beautiful in Bombay was that it belonged to nobody, and to all [...] the everyday live-and-let-live miracles thronging its overcrowded streets' (pp. 350-1). However, the novel depicts a city which, always changeable, is now developing in a more threatening way. Moor argues that in earlier times, such as those represented in *Midnight's Children* and *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, Bombay is characterised by a general level of tolerance between different religious and ethnic groups: 'on the way to Bombay the rivers of blood were usually diluted, other rivers poured into them, so that by the time they reached the city's streets the disfigurations were relatively slight' (p. 350). However, *The Moor's Last Sigh* is set in a Bombay which can no longer contain the tensions which exist between its various communities. Bombay's designation as a mixed and pluralist state is increasingly threatened by two conflicting representations of the city: as a site

of capitalist expansion in the global market, and as a site represented by a single religious and linguistic group.

The Moor's Last Sigh is concerned with Bombay's role in an increasingly global economy, a shift in focus from the earlier era of the nation in *Midnight's Children*: 'In Bombay, as the old, founding myth of the nation faded, the new god-and-mammon India was being born' (p. 351). The effects of the era of global capitalism on the city are demonstrated through the interests of Moor's father, Abraham Zogoiby, who builds up a family business until it is a corporation with multinational interests. New developments shape the landscape of modern Bombay, quite literally in the case of the land reclamation schemes which, as Moor's father, Abraham, suggests, 'brought a whole new city out of nowhere!' (p. 185). These schemes employ 'invisible' workers at extremely low wages; ignored by the system, these workers are entitled to no housing or welfare from the state, or compensation as a result of illness or injury at work. Abraham undertakes these actions and others, such as drug and weapons smuggling and enforced prostitution, with impunity, and the social relations of inequality that result produce a city that is divided into rich and poor. Moreover, the spaces of the city are produced under the illusion of transparency described by Lefebvre, a process which Rushdie allegorises by recording how the slums inhabited by the poor, such as Abraham's workers, are rendered invisible and removed from the map. Rushdie challenges the dominant illusion of transparency by highlighting how the spaces of Bombay are produced by social relations under capitalism.

The existence of poverty in Bombay is, of course, nothing new, and nor is its participation in a worldwide economy, given its role as a colonial trading centre.

However, Moor demonstrates the particular inability of critics of the dominant forces in capitalist power relations at this point to provide a legitimate alternative to the system. He suggests that 'the city, perhaps the whole country, was a palimpsest, Under World beneath Over World, black market beneath white'. On this basis, he asks:

How, trapped as we were in the hundred per cent fakery of the real, in the fancy-dress, weeping-Arab kitsch of the superficial, could we have penetrated to the full, sensual truth of the lost mother below? How could we have lived authentic lives? (pp. 184-5)

The image of the 'lost mother' is associated with both India and Bombay, and highlights Moor's inability to map cognitively his environment. Moreover, his concern with 'the hundred per cent fakery of the real' confirms that his is a representational dilemma: how can he map this environment in which the real appears to have been substituted with the signs of the real, in the manner of Baudrillard's hyperspace?⁸⁷

Moor demonstrates what Jameson terms, 'the incapacity of our minds, at least at present, to map the great global multinational and decentred communicational network in which we find ourselves caught as individual subjects'.⁸⁸ The complexity of global power relations precludes the development of a straightforward alternative to the dominant system. Businesses such as Abraham's bring both wealth and poverty to the postcolonial city and a rejection of the global network in favour of a more national system is impossible. An increasingly globalised world produces an environment which is shaped by the intersection of the social relations of the postcolonial nation and multinational capitalism. On the one hand, Indian entrepreneurs are role-models: Abraham notes that one, known as 'The Crocodile', is

‘becoming a post-colonial hero to our young’, on the grounds that he, ‘fits their empire-strikes-back plus get-rich-quick double-bill’ (*The Moor’s Last Sigh*, p. 329). Successful businesspeople can use the global economy to produce new postcolonial identities. On the other hand, these global social relations also influence the culture of Indian environments. Moor notes that his father’s protégé, Adam, and others of his generation are ‘speaking the future’s strange, binary, affectless speech - quite a change from our melodramatic garam-masala exclamations’ (p. 343). His language and persona are differentiated from a more Indian, ‘garam-masala’ style, a move which is all the more significant when he is revealed as the former Aadam Sinai, Saleem’s baby son in whom some hope for the future is invested in *Midnight’s Children*. The suggestion is that Bombay’s much celebrated hybridity is also characteristic of the dominant system of exploitative capitalism which the narrative would like to resist.

Not all critics are convinced that the contemporary era of capitalism is truly the ‘global multinational and decentred communicational network’ that Jameson identifies, however.⁸⁹ Aijaz Ahmad notes:

the most powerful capitalist firms, originating in particular imperialist countries but commanding global investments and networks of transport and communication, proclaim themselves to be nevertheless *multinationals* and *transnationals* – as if their *origins* in the United States or the Federal German Republic were a mere myth, as if their ability to accumulate surplus value from a dozen countries or more were none other than an *excess* of belonging.⁹⁰

Ahmad’s point does not conflict with Jameson’s overall conclusions in this respect, as it is this type of situation which Jameson is keen to map in order to effect change. Ahmad’s argument is that the apparently ‘global’ space produced by multinational

capitalism is engaged in obscuring the wholly unequal power relations of spaces between and within different nations. This can easily be equated with Lefebvre's assertion that dominant representations of space make it possible 'simply to register the resultant "reality" and accept it at face value'.⁹¹ Ahmad is, consequently, critical of the fiction produced by 'migrant intellectual' writers such as Rushdie, who he suggests create fictions which elide the continuing exploitation of poorer countries through concepts of hybridity and migrancy.

Ahmad's point regarding the continuing spatial inequality of multinational capitalism is undoubtedly a good one, yet it is precisely this situation which Rushdie confronts in his depiction of globalised capitalism in Bombay. My analysis differs here from Stephen Baker's reading of *The Moor's Last Sigh*, which also highlights Ahmad's comment but opposes Ahmad's Marxist reading and Rushdie's fictional interpretations.⁹² Nonetheless, Rushdie's depiction highlights the consequences of poverty and violence for all but a tiny elite of Bombay's inhabitants as a result of the economic system. Beneficiaries such as Abraham may still be Indian, yet their wealth is built on the labour of the world's poor, just as that of companies based in the West is. While Abraham's position transcends his origins, demonstrated by his investment in a bomb designed to kill his fellow-Jews, this disassociation is impossible for those whose labour he depends on, who remain permanently outside the sources of wealth both within and outside India. Rushdie's portrayal of a hybrid Bombay accepts the complexity of power relations which cannot reduce the production of spaces of poverty and exploitation to a *single* origin, yet also highlights the inequalities of the city's social relations.

Rushdie's point is not to demolish the ideas of hybridity and migrancy which he has previously promoted, but to emphasise that global capitalism's claims to universality are an illusion. To adopt Deleuze and Guattari's phrase, what capitalist societies '*detrterritorialize with one hand, they reterritorialize with the other*'.⁹³ On this basis, my analysis does not concur with Paul Cantor's reading of the Spanish section of *The Moor's Last Sigh*, in which Moor experiences the 'Street of Parasites.' The street is inhabited by wealthy expatriates who are entirely uninterested in the culture of the region to which they have relocated. Cantor suggests:

Rushdie finds this particular form of cultural hybridity empty. In his view, the commodity culture of capitalism abstracts from the local, from anything that roots a people in their soil, and substitutes instead a world of falsely universal brand names, epitomized by the fast-food chains that spring up everywhere and belong nowhere.⁹⁴

However, what Cantor does not make explicit in his argument is that Rushdie's primary criticism of the tourist site is in the expatriate refusal to engage in *any* form of cultural hybridity, as they 'plainly had no interest in the siesta or any other local customs' (*The Moor's Last Sigh*, p. 390). The inhabitants of the Street are not really globalised at all, but remain highly parochial. The space that their presence produces in southern Spain is, therefore, an example of the illusion of neutrality brought about by dominant representations of capitalist spaces.

Competing with corporations such as Abraham's for control of the space of Bombay are political groups based on religious and linguistic identification. Moor describes this as a 'war of the worlds, Under versus Over, sacred versus profane, god versus mammon, past versus future, gutter versus sky' (p. 318). In other words, this struggle is over which of these 'incompatible realities,' or ways of mapping the

environment will become dominant. The novel depicts the attempts of Raman Fielding's MA party, a fictionalised version of Bal Thackeray's Shiv Sena, to impose its representation of Bombay (Mumbai) as a Hindu city within the Hindu nation that is India. Bombay's real-life religious tensions and violence, referred to as communalist conflict, originates largely from struggles over spaces. Many commentators consider the catalyst for the communalist troubles of recent years the dispute over the Babri Masjid mosque in Ayodhya, in the state of Uttar Pradesh.⁹⁵ The mosque stood on the site of a previous Hindu temple, reputed by local legend to be the birthplace of the god Rama. Competing representations of the site as sacred to Hindus or Muslims proved incompatible, with horrific violence breaking out in the town of Ayodhya and across India as a whole. Such real-life spatial conflicts are reflected in Rushdie's novel.

The Moor's Last Sigh highlights the attempts of the MA to establish their representation of Bombay as the capital of the Hindu, Marathi-speaking state of Maharashtra. Just as Saleem's story parallels that of the nation in *Midnight's Children*, Moor's family embody the pluralistic background which has defined Bombay, but which is now under threat. The Zogoiby's mixed Catholic and Jewish ancestry forces them to counter charges that they are somehow less authentically Indian, particularly at times of political strife. Moor recalls, 'After the Emergency people started seeing through different eyes. Before the Emergency we were Indians. After it we were Christian Jews' (p. 235). Moor describes himself as 'a jewholic anonymous, a cathjew nut, a stewpot, a mongel cur,' and 'a real Bombay mix' (p. 104). However Moor's representation of Bombay's heterogeneity is challenged by the MA, who seek to redefine the city as a homogenous, Hindu space. The MA

attempt to assert a dominant representation of Bombay by denying these alternative maps through the tautology that the Hindu city can only be defined by its Hindu inhabitants.

Rushdie depicts a struggle of the incompatible realities proposed by fundamentalism, which advocates a single interpretation of the city, and pluralism, which posits the existence of different groups in society who are nonetheless considered equal. Moor sees Bombay's pluralist character embodied in his mother, Aurora, 'a city girl, perhaps *the* city girl, as much the incarnation of the smartyboots metropolis as Mother India was village earth made flesh' (p. 139). An English-speaker who is raised as a Christian in the southern city of Cochin, she is unaffiliated to any of the major religious, ethnic or linguistic factions whose conflict increasingly dominates the city. 'Aurora Bombayalis' is portrayed dancing on the cliff-top above the Chowpatty beach during the huge annual festival of Ganesha, at which she becomes a star attraction, despite her contempt for religious excess (p. 123). As years pass, however, the festival is increasingly manipulated by Hindu-fundamentalist groups, and Aurora finally meets her murderous death at the dance, most likely at the hands of her businessman husband. Pluralism is defeated by a combination of religious intolerance and greed.

Moreover, if Aurora represents a liberal pluralism which is increasingly under threat, she also demonstrates the dangers of pluralism itself. Moor describes the importance of the ideal of motherhood in Indian culture, as demonstrated by film melodrama *Mother India*, a huge success both in the novel and in reality. However, Moor sees Aurora's 'alternative vision', a more ambivalent version of Mother India. This projects 'India-as-mother, not Nargis's sentimental village-mother but a mother

of cities, as heartless and loveable, brilliant and dark, multiple and lonely, mesmeric and repugnant, pregnant and empty, truthful and deceitful as the beautiful, cruel, irresistible metropolis itself' (pp. 203-4). This is, of course, an accurate description of Aurora, who is at once a fascinating and brave figure, yet at the same time a neglectful and unkind mother to her four children. Aurora's own ambivalent nature is full of such opposing characteristics, leaving those around her subject to the unpredictable nature which her pluralist beliefs sanction. Moor's analogy suggests the same is true of the pluralist city, which inevitably includes worldviews which will oppress others.

The apparent failure of pluralist representations of the city is a central feature of *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Rushdie states of the novel:

I was interested to try to suggest there's a flip side to pluralism; the down side can be confusion, formlessness, chaos, a lack of vision or singleness of purpose. There are some very strong, monolithic, brutal views around, and sometimes those who have a clearer view get further.⁹⁶

The dangers of plural representations of space are first explored in Rushdie's previous novel, *The Satanic Verses*, which depicts the 'incompatible realities' of a number of sites. In a review of *The Satanic Verses*, Homi Bhabha writes 'Its central theme is the necessity of interpretation for establishing any form of social or textual authority. Interpretation is the first condition of empowerment and it may be the last word in tyranny'. Bhabha then uses extra-textual reference in demonstrating that what he terms 'the deadly site of the politics of interpretation' can be found in the circumstances surrounding the novel.⁹⁷ It is important to note that this affair arises from a conjunction of the Western literary and political worlds with a non-Western theological and political force that has only come about with the advent of the

success of writing such as Rushdie's which derives from postcolonial or migrant experience. This illustrates only too clearly the conflict that results from the collision of two irreconcilable ways of interpreting the world.

The Satanic Verses highlights the extent to which the clash of incompatible realities is a spatial conflict, of which the city is the 'locus'.⁹⁸ One of the main characters, Gibreel Farishta, is haunted by visions of nightmarish cities loosely based on those in both the Middle East and England and appears to be suffering from a schizophrenia-like illness. His increasing inability to relate his projected maps of the cities to the realities recognised by others highlights the dangers of a vision of reality that is simply too alternative, culminating in the murder of the woman he loves and his own suicide. Michael Keith and Steve Pile read the depiction of cities in *The Satanic Verses* thus: 'Running through the novel, spaces become the forces of dislocation that both make our longing to know that much more powerful and make our inability to do so or to judge between difference that much more difficult'.⁹⁹ In both *The Satanic Verses* and *The Moor's Last Sigh*, negotiating these maps of incompatible realities becomes a problem of legitimisation, as the characters struggle to incorporate plural representations without being destroyed by them.

The Moor's Last Sigh goes further than *The Satanic Verses*, however, as the former novel balances Gibreel's self-destruction with its other protagonist, Salahuddin's, reconciliation with his family and childhood home in India. *The Moor's Last Sigh* problematises alternatives to the dominant discourses which shape Bombay through its characterisation of plural identities. Moor's girlfriend, Uma, has a schizophrenic-like character similar to Gibreel's and is equally destructive. Moor observes that this is:

a defeat for the pluralist philosophy on which we had all been raised. For in the matter of Uma Sarasvati it had been the pluralist Uma, with her multiple selves, her highly inventive commitment to the infinite malleability of the real, her modernistically provisional sense of truth, who had turned out to be the bad egg. (p. 272)

Moreover, he notes the political significance of this outcome: 'The story of my love-life thus became a bitter parable, one whose ironies Raman Fielding would have relished, for in it the polarity between good and evil was reversed' (p. 272). Attempts to map Bombay through its pluralist character encounter problems of legitimation which are also experienced in the 'modernistically provisional sense of truth' of Rushdie's narratives. The narrative's dilemma is reflected in Aurora's paintings of her son. The Moor-figure's hybrid nature becomes evil:

He appeared to lose, in these last pictures, his previous metaphorical rôle as a unifier of opposites, a standard-bearer of pluralism, ceasing to stand as a symbol – however approximate – of the new nation, and being transformed, instead, into a semi-allegorical figure of decay. Aurora had apparently decided that the ideas of impurity, cultural admixture and *mélange* which had been, for most of her creative life, the closest things she had found to a notion of the Good, were in fact capable of distortion, and contained a potential for darkness as well as light. (p. 303)

The narrative problematises not only the failure of pluralist approaches to counter the monolithic, but also draws attention to their own capacity for violence.

The novel does not solve the problems associated with mapping Bombay and ends with the apparent destruction of its heterogeneous nature. Conflict between social forces eventually results in violence which destroys Moor's inclusive representation of the city: 'it was no longer my Bombay, no longer special, no longer the city of mixed-up, mongrel joy' (p. 376). Nonetheless, this violent space is produced by the relations of its inhabitants: 'the explosions burst out of our very own

bodies. We were both the bombers and the bombs' (p. 372). The novel does not identify the exact source of the terror, although communalism and the gang warfare between Abraham and others clearly play a role. Moor states, 'Hindu and Muslim areas were both attacked; men, women, children perished, and there was nobody to give the dignity of meaning to their deaths' (p. 372). This absence of meaning is the final riddle for Moor, and for the novel as a whole. The narrative cannot explain why pluralism has failed so dramatically, or how to avoid 'the potential for darkness as well as for light' that Aurora finally surrenders to in her pictures (p. 303). The incompatible realities of Bombay produce a space which the novel is unable to map.

The novel's final words on Bombay are attributed to a character who represents yet another aspect of the city's identity. Nadia Wadia, the former beauty queen, is attacked and permanently disfigured during the violence, 'like the city whose true creature she was' (p. 352). Shortly afterwards she reveals that her initial reaction was despair, but that she soon realised that at the age of twenty-three, her life is not yet over. Nor is the city's: 'The city will survive. New towers will rise. Better days will come' (pp. 376-7). However, despite these positive sentiments, it is significant that the words are spoken only as Moor and the narrative are leaving Bombay for good. Rushdie offers the message but the novel cannot represent this possible future and is silenced.

Speaking in an interview, Rushdie describes *The Moor's Last Sigh* as:

a completion of what I began in *Midnight's Children*, *Shame* and *The Satanic Verses* – the story of myself, where I come from, a story of origins and memory. But it's also a public project that forms an arc, my response to an age in history that began in 1947. That cycle of novels is now complete.¹⁰⁰

These novels map the spaces of the subcontinent by highlighting their production through a complex network of social relations. The earlier novels challenge dominant representations of Indian and Pakistani spaces and produce alternative political fictions. However, like Lefebvre and Jameson, Rushdie encounters problems in his attempts to provide fictional maps which chart resistant representations of space. Nonetheless, *Midnight's Children's* continuing interrogation of the consequences of its own narrative engages with the politicised conception of representation which characterises contemporary mapping strategies. *The Satanic Verses* and *The Moor's Last Sigh* develop this project in their maps of city spaces. The tendency of the postmodern city to escape even the most plural system of mapping is depicted in Rushdie's portrayal of Bombay in *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Rushdie's novels do not attempt to solve the representational problems that are associated with mapping strategies, but continue to investigate the resistant potential of fictional maps.

¹ Salman Rushdie, *The Moor's Last Sigh* (London: Vintage, 1996), p. 351.

² Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Granta, 1992), p. 13.

³ Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 14.

⁴ Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (London: Vintage, 1995), p. 9. Further references to this edition will be given after quotations in the text.

⁵ Salman Rushdie with Uma Chaudhuri, 'Imaginative Maps: Excerpts from a Conversation with Salman Rushdie', http://www.trill-home.com/rushdie/uc_maps.html.

⁶ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 28.

⁷ Stephen Baker, *The Fiction of Postmodernity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p. 170.

⁸ Rushdie states, 'My only conscious echo of *Passage to India* was to have a Dr. Aziz as well' in an interview with Uma Chaudhuri, 'Imaginative Maps: Excerpts from a Conversation with Salman Rushdie', http://www.trill-home.com/rushdie/uc_maps.html.

⁹ Salman Rushdie, 'The Empire Writes Back with a Vengeance', *The Times*, 3 July 1982, p. 8.

¹⁰ Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 17.

¹¹ Aruna Srivastava, "'The Empire Writes Back': Language and History in *Shame* and *Midnight's Children*", in *Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism*, ed. by Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), pp. 65-78 (p. 75).

¹² Salman Rushdie, *Shame* (London: Vintage, 1995), pp. 38-9.

¹³ Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 1992), p. 77; p. 73.

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- ¹⁴ Rushdie, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, p. 108.
- ¹⁵ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'How to Read a "Culturally Different" Book', in *Colonial Discourse/Postcolonial Theory*, ed. by Francis Barker et al (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), pp. 125-50 (p. 128).
- ¹⁶ Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 17. See also *Shame*, p. 29.
- ¹⁷ Gareth Griffiths, 'The Myth of Authenticity: Representation, Discourse and Social Practice', in *De-Scribing Empire: Post-colonialism and Textuality*, ed. by Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 70-85, p. 82-3.
- ¹⁸ Rushdie, *Shame*, p. 28.
- ¹⁹ Rushdie, *Shame*, p. 28.
- ²⁰ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 271-313 (p. 308).
- ²¹ Tariq Ali, 'Midnight's Children', *New Left Review*, 136 (1982), 87-95 (p. 94).
- ²² Salman Rushdie with Uma Chaudhuri, 'Imaginative Maps: Excerpts from a Conversation with Salman Rushdie', http://www.trill-home.com/rushdie/uc_maps.html.
- ²³ *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 13.
- ²⁴ Lefebvre, p. 281.
- ²⁵ *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 100.
- ²⁶ Benedict Anderson (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (London: Verso, 1991), p. 6.
- ²⁷ Anderson, p. 7.
- ²⁸ Salman Rushdie, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (London: Vintage, 2000), p. 164.
- ²⁹ Lefebvre, p. 365.
- ³⁰ *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 14.
- ³¹ *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 100.
- ³² Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. by Donald F. Bouchard, trans. by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 148.
- ³³ Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, p. 148.
- ³⁴ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, (London: Verso, 1991), p. 5.
- ³⁵ Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. 406.
- ³⁶ *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 16.
- ³⁷ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1990), p. 95.
- ³⁸ Richard Cronin, *Imagining India* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 13.
- ³⁹ Jameson, p. 44.
- ⁴⁰ Fawzia Afzal-Khan, *Cultural Imperialism and the Indo-English Novel: Genre and Ideology in R. K. Narayan, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya and Salman Rushdie* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), p. 143.
- ⁴¹ See, for example, Michael Gorra, *After Empire: Scott, Naipaul, Rushdie* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997).
- ⁴² Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. 298. Jameson suggests that while 'the novel is the weakest of the new cultural areas [...] in the Third World of course this all falls out very differently.'
- ⁴³ Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 57.
- ⁴⁴ Fredric Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 55.
- ⁴⁵ Rufus Cook, 'Place and Displacement in Salman Rushdie's Work', *World Literature Today*, 68 (1994), 23-28 (p. 26).
- ⁴⁶ Rushdie, *Shame*, p. 29.
- ⁴⁷ Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992), p. 174.
- ⁴⁸ Timothy Brennan, *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation* (London: Macmillan, 1989).
- ⁴⁹ Kathleen Flanagan, 'The Fragmented Self in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*', *Commonwealth Novel in English*, 5.1 (1992), 38-45 (p. 40).

- ⁵⁰ *The Moor's Last Sigh*, p. 297.
- ⁵¹ *Shame*, p. 71.
- ⁵² Suleri, pp. 177-78.
- ⁵³ Kathryn Hume, 'Taking a Stand While Lacking a Center: Rushdie's Postmodern Politics', *Philological Quarterly*, 74 (1995), 209-30 (p. 213).
- ⁵⁴ Revati Krishnaswamy, 'Mythologies of Migrancy: Postcolonialism, Postmodernism and the Politics of (Dis)Location', *Ariel*, 26 (1995), 125-46 (p. 139). Although Krishnaswamy does not explicitly state as much, the use of the term 'de-territorialized' alludes to the work of Deleuze and Guattari. While this interface is clearly of interest, it is outwith the scope of the present work.
- ⁵⁵ Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Sensibilities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 239-40.
- ⁵⁶ *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 25.
- ⁵⁷ 'Imaginative Maps: Excerpts from a Conversation with Salman Rushdie', http://www.trill-home.com/rushdie/uc_maps.html.
- ⁵⁸ Stephen Baker, "'You Must Remember This': Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh*", *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 35.1 (2000), 43-54 (p. 51).
- ⁵⁹ R. Radhakrishnan, 'Poststructuralist Politics – Towards a Theory of Coalition', in *Postmodernism, Jameson, Critique*, ed. by Douglas Kellner (Washington, DC: Maisonneuve Press, 1989), pp. 301-32 (p. 322, p. 323-24).
- ⁶⁰ Rushdie, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, pp. 59-61.
- ⁶¹ Jameson, *The Geopolitical Aesthetic*, p. 56.
- ⁶² *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 404.
- ⁶³ Roshan G. Shahani, 'Polyphonous Voices in the City: Bombay's Indian-English Fiction', in *Bombay: Mosaic of Modern Culture*, ed. by Sujata Patel and Alice Thorner (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 99-112 (p. 103).
- ⁶⁴ The information contained in this section is sourced from *Bombay: Mosaic of Modern Culture*, and its companion volume, *Bombay: Metaphor for Modern India*, both ed. by Sujata Patel and Alice Thorner (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1995), and Gillian Tindall, *City of Gold: The Biography of Bombay* (London: Temple Smith, 1982).
- ⁶⁵ Alice Thorner, 'Bombay: Diversity and Exchange', in *Bombay: Mosaic of Modern Culture*, pp. xi-xxxiii (p. xi).
- ⁶⁶ For a summary of the events of the months of violence in Bombay see Kalpana Sharma, 'Chronicle of a Riot Foretold', in *Bombay: Metaphor for Modern India*, pp. 268-86.
- ⁶⁷ Rushdie, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, p. 350. Further references to this edition are given after quotations in the text.
- ⁶⁸ *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 404.
- ⁶⁹ *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, pp. 95-6.
- ⁷⁰ Norma Evenson, 'An Architectural Hybrid', in *Bombay: Mosaic of Modern Culture*, pp. 165-81 (p. 165).
- ⁷¹ *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 22.
- ⁷² *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 404.
- ⁷³ Rachael Dwyer, *All You Want is Money, All You Need is Love: Sexuality and Romance in Modern India* (London: Cassell, 2000), p. 183.
- ⁷⁴ Shahani, pp. 99-112 (p. 101).
- ⁷⁵ Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (Dover: Delaware: The Consortium, 1988), p. 55.
- ⁷⁶ *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, p. 238.
- ⁷⁷ *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, p. 238.
- ⁷⁸ *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, p. 62.
- ⁷⁹ *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, p. 80.
- ⁸⁰ *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, pp. 210-11.
- ⁸¹ *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, p. 52.
- ⁸² *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 12.
- ⁸³ Lefebvre, p. 28.
- ⁸⁴ *Imaginary Homelands*, p. 404. The original quotation is from *The Satanic Verses*, p. 314.
- ⁸⁵ Catherine Cundy, *Salman Rushdie* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), p. 115.

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- ⁸⁶ Salman Rushdie with Maya Jaggi, 'The Last Laugh', *New Statesman and Society*, 8 September 1995, pp. 20-21 (p. 20).
- ⁸⁷ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. by Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).
- ⁸⁸ Jameson, p. 44.
- ⁸⁹ Jameson, p. 44.
- ⁹⁰ Ahmad, *In Theory*, p. 130.
- ⁹¹ Lefebvre, p. 281.
- ⁹² Baker, 43-54 (pp. 43-5).
- ⁹³ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R Lane (London: The Athlone Press Ltd, 1984), p. 257.
- ⁹⁴ Paul A. Cantor, 'Tales of the Alhambra: Rushdie's Use of Spanish History in *The Moor's Last Sigh*', *Studies in the Novel*, 29 (1997), 323-41 (p. 334).
- ⁹⁵ Rushdie refers to the role this site has played in communalist conflicts in *Imaginary Homelands*, pp. 27-8.
- ⁹⁶ Rushdie with Maya Jaggi, 'The Last Laugh', pp. 20-21 (p. 21).
- ⁹⁷ Homi Bhabha, 'Novel Metropolis', *New Statesman and Society*, 9 February 1990, pp. 16-18 (p. 17).
- ⁹⁸ *The Satanic Verses*, p. 314.
- ⁹⁹ Michael Keith and Steve Pile, 'Introduction Part 1: The Politics of Place...', in *Place and the Politics of Identity*, ed. by Keith and Pile (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 1-21 (p. 21).
- ¹⁰⁰ Rushdie with Maya Jaggi, pp. 20-21, (p. 20).

Chapter Three: Michael Ondaatje

All I desired was to walk on such an earth that had no maps. (Michael Ondaatje)¹

The novels of Michael Ondaatje, like those of Rushdie, provide fictional maps of postcolonial spaces of nations and cities. However, while Rushdie sets out to write political fictions, Ondaatje has been accused by some critics of evading political commitment in his earlier work. Certainly, his narratives do not demonstrate the desire to map spaces definitively that appears in Rushdie's novels. Rather, Ondaatje's fiction often seems to follow the example of one of his characters, the English patient, in representing an 'earth that had no maps'. However, this chapter compares the spatial representations of three of his novels in order to argue that the increasing political commitment of his work also allows him to introduce strategies of mapping.

The opening section of this chapter evaluates the connection between the lack of mapping strategies in Ondaatje's 1976 novel, *Coming Through Slaughter*, and the absence of any viable model for resistance. An analysis of two of his more recent novels demonstrates the growing significance of mapping strategies in his work. *In the Skin of a Lion* depicts the spaces of the postcolonial nation in Canada and of the city of Toronto as products of social relations, while *The English Patient* explores the colonised spaces of the desert. My analysis examines the extent to which Ondaatje provides resistant maps of these spaces.

Landscape Suicide: *Coming Through Slaughter*

Coming Through Slaughter is a fictionalised account of the life of Buddy Bolden, a cornet player in the early days of jazz. The setting of the novel offers the potential for politicised representations of the production of space. Bolden is part of the poverty-stricken African-American communities of New Orleans in the early years of the twentieth century. These spaces are produced by racist social relations which denies African-Americans access to more privileged spaces of the city. Deborah Madsen argues that 'the ethnic literatures of the United States [make] a significant impact upon thinking about and representations of post-coloniality as a transnational condition'.² The African-American community represented in *Coming Through Slaughter* experience both the economic and cultural effects of internal colonisation, and inhabit spaces produced by colonial relations. Nonetheless, it is by no means clear that Ondaatje's novel documents either the development of a dominant construction of spaces which marginalise and exclude African-Americans, or any means by which the dominant can be challenged. This section explores the extent to which the absence of mapping strategies in the novel precludes a political commitment to change.

The novel recounts Bolden's gradual withdrawal from relationships with others, culminating in a mental breakdown which confines him to a mental institution for the remaining twenty-four years of his life. Critical opinion has been divided on the final impact of Bolden's withdrawal from society, and of the apparent acceptance of this condition for the artist-figure. Constance Rooke argues that the ending of the novel can be read positively, producing 'a space in which the whole, pernicious issue of "prizes" and the contentious ego has simply gone away'.³ Christian Bök, however,

reads the novel as the romanticization of violence in ‘aesthetes who passionately reject social integration in the name of aphasia’.⁴ For Bök, this focus on the artist denies the novel social responsibility. An analysis of Bolden’s breakdown as an inability to map his environment demonstrates that political agency becomes impossible for the protagonist. Moreover, Ondaatje’s focus on the artist also compromises the political commitment of the narrative.

The spaces of early twentieth century Louisiana depicted in the novel are shown almost entirely through the character of Bolden, despite his increasing alienation from the environment of which he is a part. Initially he is a participant in his community and through the relationships of home and work his environment can be mapped. The narrator introduces ‘his geography’ and describes the streets and the buildings where he lived and worked (*Coming Through Slaughter*, p. 2). Early in the novel, Bolden’s central role in the barber’s shop where he works is reported. Every morning he walks with his children to school, buying them breakfast and proving himself as a father. Crucially, this role is based on the connection that is established between himself, the children and their environment:

He gave himself completely to them during the walk, no barriers as they walked down the washed empty streets one on either side, their thin cool hands each holding onto a finger of his. Eventually they knew the politics of the street better than their teachers and he in turn learned the new street songs from them. (p. 7)

Bolden even becomes the chronicler of his community’s life through the publication of *The Cricket*, a broadsheet based on the gossip he hears through his connections in the locale. The narrator notes, ‘his life at this time had a fine and precise balance to it, with a careful allotment of hours’ (p. 7). Detailing this balanced phase of Bolden’s

life, the narrative is also able to represent the spaces in which Bolden operates in a manner which reflects the African-American shaping of this part of the city, through community relationships and cultural expressions such as jazz.

The extent to which a withdrawal from the community is spatial is illustrated by the character of Bellocq, a crippled photographer who relieves his loneliness only by taking photographs of prostitutes.⁵ The narrator identifies the beginning of Bolden's rejection of the social world in his friendship with Bellocq. Bolden uses a spatial image to describe their relative positions in society: 'we were furnished rooms and Bellocq was a window looking out' (p. 59). Bolden, at this point a functioning member of mainstream society, can identify himself in a state of some security and interconnectedness, demonstrated by the homely image of the 'furnished rooms'. Bellocq, however, is a spectator, or perhaps a process of transition between one world of identity and the next. During the two men's friendship, 'they had talked for hours moving gradually off the edge of the social world. As Bellocq lived at the edge in any case he was at ease there and as Buddy did not he moved on past him like a naïve explorer looking for footholes' (p. 65). The suggestion is that Bellocq's isolation infects Bolden, causing him to reject the boundaries of normal society. This is clearly an unsuccessful course, with Bellocq, the 'window looking out', immolating himself in his room. Rejecting the world of social connections does not allow one to exist in a state of transition, but actually isolates the individual in a state of non-existence. Bellocq's experience of isolation and spatial marginalisation prefigures Bolden's own withdrawal from the environment.

Spatial imagery is also used to describe Bolden's attempt to sublimate the demands of history and community into his relationship with a lover, Robin. After

they have sex Bolden describes how they lie ‘coiled into each other under the brown and white cloth. Trying to come closer than that. A step past the territory’ (p. 63). However, the notion of territory that separates Robin’s identity from his own cannot be removed, as both must continue to interact with others in the world. Indeed, it only takes the appearance of Webb, a former friend of Bolden’s who is now investigating his disappearance from his wife and family, to break the connection between Bolden and Robin. Immediately after Webb’s visit, ‘the wall of wire barrier glass went up between me and Robin’ (p. 88). She becomes ‘a landscape so alien and so newly foreign that I was ridiculous here’ (p. 88). Bolden has attempted to map his sense of self through this relationship, however problematically, yet the intrusion of the social world and its alternative commitments leaves him utterly disorientated.

Bolden’s madness occurs as he abandons any attempt to locate himself within his environment. Webb notes that Bolden has never spoken to his wife about his past and concludes, ‘he could just as easily be wiping out his past again in a casual gesture, contemptuous’ (p. 17). Bolden’s failure to connect his past and present in a coherent history is also a failure to establish community and map the environment, described by Webb as ‘Landscape suicide’ (p. 17). Bolden never recovers from his mental breakdown and is unable to recognise any of his former friends or participate in any communal activities after years in an asylum. Landscape suicide involves a rejection of mapping strategies compatible with the failure identified by Jameson, ‘of the individual human body to locate itself, to organise its immediate surroundings perceptually, and cognitively to map its position in a mappable external world’.⁶ Jameson’s association of the failure of mapping with a lack of politicised agency is also demonstrated through Bolden’s life in the asylum. Conditions are horrific, with

poor facilities, a lack of heating and rapes regularly carried out on patients, including Bolden, by male staff. Bolden, however, does not participate in any of the protests organised by the other patients and, oblivious to the nature of the attacks perpetrated on him, 'sublime took rapes from what he thought were ladies in blue pajamas' (p. 160). Unable to map his environment, he is not only unable to challenge it, but cannot even recognise the nature of his experiences.

Coming Through Slaughter is significant in a discussion of fictional mapping as it demonstrates a complete rejection of mapping strategies by the protagonist. As the ambiguity of the title *Coming Through Slaughter* suggests, a final verdict on Bolden's fate is absent from the novel. The title refers to the trips Bolden makes while a patient in the asylum which require him to travel through the small town of Slaughter nearby. To come through slaughter clearly suggests an escape from the violence perpetrated by Bolden in the earlier parts of the book, yet the town he passes through is simply a stopping point on the way back to the asylum which he never leaves. Ondaatje's narrative finally avoids the distinction between positive and negative readings of Bolden's situation through his abdication from any form of responsibility or agency. The absence of any reflection on the social forces which have shaped the space of the asylum offers little suggestion that the fate of its inhabitant could be any different.

Most significantly, *Coming Through Slaughter* does not simply represent the ambiguous nature of one character's fate, but extends this rejection of politicised mapping through the links established between the protagonist and the modern-day narrator. Bolden's story is framed by the occasional intrusion of the narrator, an Ondaatje-like figure who photographs the areas where the real-life Bolden lived, and

compares himself to his protagonist. A sympathetic connection is established as the narrator records, 'The photograph moves and becomes a mirror' explaining that he, too, has self-mutilated with a razor (p. 143). Bolden and the narrator are united as 'tortured' artists and Ondaatje's narrative engages with the same tensions that Bolden encounters in his music. The fragmented narrative style, with its inconclusive ending, parallels Bolden's desired musical experience, which is enjoyed by spectators in a parade who hear only fragments of the whole rather than beginnings and endings. He explains:

I wanted them to be able to come in where they pleased and leave when they pleased and somehow hear the germs of the start and all the possible endings at whatever point in the music that I had reached *then*. (p. 98)

This is reflected in Bolden's desire to maintain relationships in a fluid manner which rejects the claims of past or future, and it is significant that the breakdown of both his music and his sanity occur during a parade performance. Both occur as a form of 'landscape suicide' in which the combination of different genres found in his music leads to the frenzied playing which reflects his final and permanent mental disassociation from the history and community around him. The narrator's identification with Bolden in his madness, through self-mutilation and the repeated reference to his being the same age as his protagonist at the moment of his final breakdown, leaves him in danger of the same failure of mapping strategies and a subsequent denial of political agency.

Coming Through Slaughter employs many techniques typical of postmodern narrative, including fragmented chronology, a variety of narrative voices, which cannot always be distinguished easily, and a mixture of historical fact and fiction.

Yet, in contrast to Rushdie's work, the novel does not participate fully in the process described by Linda Hutcheon, in which 'the self-consciousness of art is paradoxically made the means to a new engagement with the social and historical world'.⁷ This occurs despite Ondaatje's focus on the 'self-consciousness of art', represented by Bolden's and the narrator's refusal to engage in a fixed and linear means of expression. The narrator doubts his ability to represent the spaces in which Bolden lived sixty years previously, recognising that the photographs he takes record only 'the complete absence of him' (p. 143). The picture itself is 'a black and white photograph, part of a history book' (p. 145). W. M. Verhoeven equates the fixing action of the camera with that of the novelist's language. He writes:

Ondaatje finds himself time and time again faced with the daunting and unresolved poststructuralist dialectic between the creative and the reductive potential of language; with the paradox, that is, that language can at the same time be instrumental in creating and communicating truth, meaning and identity, because of its tendency to select and immobilize.⁸

Both the narrative and the protagonist are faced with this dialectic, with Bolden tormented by a search for certainties which he 'loathed and needed' in relationships (*Coming Through Slaughter*, p. 80). Lorraine M. York argues that in his relationship with the world around him, Bolden is 'caught up in the conflict between fixity and flux,' a conflict comparable to that experienced by the novelist with regard to his techniques of representation.⁹

However, this postmodern concern with representational issues does not lead to 'a new engagement with the social and historical world,' and cannot be understood as an exploration of new strategies of mapping. While the narrative of a novel such as *Midnight's Children* problematises its own ability to represent the spaces of the

nation, *Coming Through Slaughter* is concerned less with the history of the social world than with the history of the artist-protagonist's withdrawal from that world. Certain sections of the novel do offer connections between social and spatial relations, and the intrusion of the small amount of factual detail available on Bolden's life, including a photograph, interviews with friends and hospital records, that Ondaatje incorporates into a fictionalised biography reminds the reader of the extra-textual social relations which produced the spaces which the real-life Bolden occupied. However, the narrative's focus on Bolden's mental disintegration precludes an examination of the social production of the spaces of racism, poverty and sexual abuse which provide the background to his experience.

The narrative follows Bolden's own mental pattern in rejecting mapping strategies as the novel progresses. Scenes at the opening of the novel, in which Bolden participates in his community, offer some explanation for the development of spaces of prostitution and violence described. It is noted that after the death of her father, Nora and her sisters each 'slipped successively into the red light district' (p. 20). Ondaatje's use of the term 'red light district' highlights the extent to which prostitution is both a social and a spatial phenomenon, while Nora's becoming a prostitute is based on the combination of gender and economics that prevents women in her situation from earning money in a less dangerous way. However, as the novel progresses and Bolden's mental condition deteriorates, such explanations for the social and spatial confinement of prostitutes cease. While the experiences of New Orleans' poor are recounted in often horrific detail, they remain a backdrop to Bolden's own mental disintegration. Overall, the fate of prostitutes is secondary to Bolden's mental state, from Nora's strength at the height of Bolden's success in the

world to the degrading life endured by the diseased 'mattress whores', the sight of whom prompts him to declare, 'My brain tonight has a mattress strapped to its back' (p. 125). At the close of this scene of physical pain and sexual violence Ondaatje even writes 'There is no horror in the way they run their lives', prefiguring Bolden's own acceptance of sexual violence and degradation within the asylum (p. 126). The novel offers little in the way of alternative mappings for the disadvantaged inhabitants of Bolden's New Orleans environment. The novel closes on the rejection by the individual of both the good and bad points of the community and a refusal to participate in any movement for change. Disassociation from the environment and the abandoning of any form of mapping clearly negates the possibility of recognising power relations and enacting resistance.

The use of Bolden as a central character in documenting the experiences of black New Orleans in the 1900s sets up tension between the writing of a community history and the foregrounding of a protagonist whose antisocial behaviour and eventual madness moves the focus of the narrative away from that community. Set in Louisiana in the early twentieth century, the novel nonetheless makes little explicit reference to the systematic racism that would inevitably have affected the black community. Arun Mukherjee argues convincingly 'one would not come across the fact in *Coming Through Slaughter* that Bolden's mother had been a slave. The Buddy Bolden of Ondaatje has no colour. His problems are entirely related to his art'.¹⁰ While Mukherjee is vehement in her rejection of Ondaatje's apolitical stance, it is necessary to observe that the lack of political commitment in the novel does not invalidate it as a work. However, it is clear that the narrative's rejection of mapping strategies does negate the possibility of resistance to the poverty and racism that are

so prevalent in the spaces of the novel. Ondaatje's focus on the character of Bolden obscures the spaces in which he operates and introduces a parallel between the narrative's withdrawal from the spaces of the African-American community and Bolden's own retreat into madness.

Bolden's history cannot be read as an indictment of the internal colonisation suffered by African-American communities during the early twentieth century. *Coming Through Slaughter* does not, overall, show how racist social relations shape the spaces inhabited by African-Americans such as Bolden. As a result, it cannot establish maps of this environment which either challenge the dominant representations of these sites or offer new representations of spaces of resistance. However, as critics such as Christian Bök and Susan Ellis suggest, Ondaatje's later novels demonstrate increasing political commitment.¹¹ This occurs with a new focus on postcolonial narrative, which highlights the extent to which colonial spaces are constructed by dominant representations which are nonetheless subject to challenge. The remainder of this chapter analyses postcolonial representations of spaces in *In the Skin of a Lion* and *The English Patient* in order to establish that Ondaatje's increasing concern with postcolonial politics is accompanied by a corresponding increase in strategies of mapping.

Constructing Spaces: *In the Skin of a Lion*

In the Skin of a Lion demonstrates an increasing political commitment in Ondaatje's work. Set amongst the immigrant and workers' communities of Toronto, the novel details the dangers of their working conditions and the acts of resistance they instigate. The novel also displays a far greater concern with the spaces inhabited by

these communities. Unlike *Coming Through Slaughter*, which tends to offer descriptions of the city space of New Orleans only as a backdrop to the mental disintegration of the protagonist, *In the Skin of a Lion* centres on the city of Toronto itself, with the ensemble of characters offering perspectives on different aspects of the city's development. My analysis demonstrates that Ondaatje uses mapping strategies to depict Toronto as the product of conflicting social relations, and to challenge the dominant representations of the city which control its sites.

One way in which this occurs is through his representation of Canada as a heterogeneous postcolonial space which is constructed through the social relations of immigrant groups. Works such as *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* and *Coming Through Slaughter* are set in North America, yet *In the Skin of a Lion* differs from Ondaatje's earlier fiction in focussing explicitly on the creation of North America as a postcolonial environment. As a former settler colony, in which the native population is now vastly outnumbered by the descendants of both Anglo-French settlers and immigrants from many other countries, Canada is of course a very different postcolonial environment from the nations of India and Pakistan described by Rushdie. The particular conditions of European colonisation of Canada have been reflected in the nation's literature. Many critics have noted that earlier Canadian literature tends to involve stories of exploration, in which a vast and hostile wilderness is brought under control by Canada's inhabitants.

Such critics have also suggested that more contemporary fiction, however, is commonly less concerned with charting and defining Canada than it is with detailing the multiplicity of influences which make up the modern postcolonial nation. Graham Huggan suggests:

many contemporary Canadian writers seem less interested than their immediate or more distant predecessors in evoking a sense of place than in expressing a kind of placelessness through which the notion of a fixed location, and the corresponding possibility of a fixed identity, are resisted.¹²

Huggan explains that in using the term 'placelessness' he continues to recognise the significance of place, but denies that there is an innate or permanent identity associated with a particular environment. Ondaatje's novel depicts a postcolonial Canadian space which is characterised by a multiplicity of influences. Similarly, Susan Spearey differentiates writing such as Ondaatje's from earlier Canadian works:

Ondaatje does not document the individual's taming of, or coming to terms with, a wildness that is at once external and internal, alien and familiar. Rather, he traces the ongoing *transformations* of landscapes and individuals as he explores their influences upon one another.¹³

Ondaatje's novel is typical of a newer type of Canadian writing which replaces a hierarchical relationship between individual and environment with a concern with the ways in which spaces are produced through the interaction of social groups, in the manner identified by Henri Lefebvre.¹⁴ *In the Skin of a Lion* maps the ways in which both Canada and the city of Toronto are therefore brought into being by the multiple understandings of space that are enacted on these territories.

Canada is a relatively young country at the time of the novel, and one which is undergoing dramatic development, as the industrial focus of the novel relates. Much of the land is uncharted; the novel's protagonist, Patrick, is born 'into a region which did not appear on a map until 1910, though his family had worked there for twenty years and the land had been homesteaded since 1816' (p. 10). Cartography is not

necessary for the creation of a place, yet the mapping of the land does both reflect and determine its character. Ondaatje continues:

In the school atlas the place is pale green and nameless. The river slips out of an unnamed lake and is a simple blue line until it becomes the Napanee twenty-five miles to the south, and, only because of the logging, will eventually be called Depot Creek. "Deep Eau." (p. 11)

This map highlights the complexity of Canada's postcolonial situation through a complex network of naming. The absence of the town from the map is a reminder of a corresponding absence of political power in the rural region, which is included in the established spatial relations of the country only through its participation in the nation's economic system. The unnamed town also recalls the equally nameless immigrant workers who Patrick watches on their way to their temporary logging jobs. Patrick's father explains that the loggers '*don't know where they are,*' as immigrants who have no connection with the town other than their labour (p. 133). To be nameless is to be disorientated, and politically disenfranchised. The naming of Depot Creek illustrates the changes that occur through the application of different languages and knowledges. However, the Napanee river is a reminder, perhaps, of an entirely pre-colonial past, and of native cultures which struggle to continue within the context of European immigration. The focus of the novel on the building of Toronto, a modern city, is a reminder of this recent act of creation. Crucially, the novel denies that the immigrant simply adapts to a pre-existing Canada, but emphasises that he or she engages in forming the nation.

Ondaatje's novel does not suggest that the character of the geographical area known as Canada is somehow only created with the arrival of colonisers, but emphasises the particular conditions of the production of space which bring about

modern Canada. After journeying from Europe, the construction worker Nicholas Temelcoff 'remembered landing in Saint John and everyone thinking how primitive it looked. How primitive Canada was' (pp. 45-6). Becoming Canadian does not entail a rejection of other cultural identities, as the nun saved from a fatal fall on the bridge Nicholas is constructing realises as they sit in a recreation of a Macedonian bar, complete with darkness which 'represents a Macedonian night where customers sit outside at their tables' (p. 37). It is this national identification that allows the nun to locate herself in the environment of her rescuer: 'Now the arbour-like wallpaper makes sense to her. Now the parrot has a language' (p. 37). Rather, Canada becomes a collection of these immigrant identities; these new communities *are* the modern city of Toronto, which is a new entity to each of its inhabitants, Anglo-Canadian or otherwise. Patrick, despite being born in Canada and brought up as an English-speaker, experiences Toronto in a way which deliberately reflects Nicholas's more conventional immigrant experience. Patrick, 'arrived in the city of Toronto as if it were land after years at sea', and is 'an immigrant to the city' (p. 53). In this way, Ondaatje depicts a Canada produced by the complexity of colonial relations.

Patrick shares the immigrants' experiences of dislocation and alienation. Leaving a lonely childhood, he arrives in Toronto 'new even to himself' (p. 54). Not only is this self disassociated from his earlier life, he is also alienated from the new society around him: 'He spoke out his name and it struggled up in a hollow echo and was lost in the high air of Union Station. No one turned. They were in the belly of a whale' (p. 54). While working in the waterworks tunnel, he lives in an area 'made up mostly of immigrants and he walked everywhere not hearing any language he knew, deliriously anonymous. The people on the street, the Macedonians and Bulgarians,

were his only mirror' (p. 112). The image of the mirror is significant, as it suggests a representation of the self in the world which is based on reflecting experience rather than establishing agency. Moreover, at this point he is unable to interact with those around him, and later he describes himself as 'a prism that refracted' the lives of others such as Clara, Alice and Temelcoff: 'this cluster that made up a drama without him' (p. 157). At this stage, 'he could hear the rattle within that suggested a space between him and the community. A gap of love' (p. 157). Although this problem is never entirely solved, Patrick is able to map the city through his relationship with Alice and her daughter Hana.

Patrick's relationship to the physical environment is mediated by his interaction with others. Ondaatje writes, 'Patrick has clung like moss to strangers, to the nooks and fissures of their situations. He has always been alien, the third person in the picture. He is the one born in this country who knows nothing of the place' (pp. 156-7). However, through Alice he learns of 'the darkness of his own country' that is represented by political struggle (p. 157). Once again, Canada is perceived as more than a physical environment, with the battle for control over space an essential part of the knowledge of the country Patrick receives. However, by recognising himself as alien, Patrick takes the first steps towards an increased sense of belonging:

He was always comfortable in someone else's landscape, enjoyed being taught the customs of a place. Patrick wanted the city Hana had constructed for herself – the places she brought together and held as if on the delicate thread of her curiosity. (p. 138)

This idea of construction is central, with the city represented by a personal map based on interaction with others. This is consistent with Lefebvre's observation that, '*(Social) space is a (social) product*', with space and social relations proving

mutually constitutive on both a larger and smaller scale.¹⁵ The ‘facts of the story’ of early twentieth century Canada ‘had surrounded Hana since birth’, allowing her to understand the alternative conception of space in which she lives (*In the Skin of a Lion*, p. 157). Gradually, Patrick’s acceptance of these narratives allows him to feel a part of this community: ‘He saw the interactions, saw how each one of them was carried by the strength of something more than themselves’ (p. 144). He compares this to the street musicians he hears, aware that ‘he could add music by simply providing the thread of a hum’, and so add his own narrative theme to the mix (p. 144).

He concludes:

His own life was no longer a single story but part of a mural, which was a falling together of accomplices. Patrick saw a wondrous night web – all of these fragments of a human order, something ungoverned by the family he was born into or the headlines of the day. (p. 145)

The image of the web is significant, for this is not a linear map, but one which intersects at various points and moves on from the other possible narratives which surround him. One such intersection occurs as Patrick, Alice and Hana walk home from a meeting at the waterworks: ‘He loved this part of the city, the evening streets as an extension of his limbs’ (p. 158). At the point when Patrick is most connected, both in terms of his family relationship and participation in the community of immigrant workers, he is able to appreciate himself and the city in a mutually dependent, yet comprehensible manner. Susan Spearey argues that none of the characters:

is portrayed as being essentially linked to or determined by his or her respective origins, which by and large remain obscure. Rather, each is

designated by the narrative with points of beginning which underscore the relation of that character to the stories mapped out in the text.¹⁶

In this way, it is the new communities of Toronto which provide the relationship bonds which prove necessary for mapping the environment in the novel.

This can be illustrated by an analysis of Patrick's relationship with Clara, which fails to give him the community bonds he needs to map his environment. Interacting with her he feels 'these gestures removed place, country, everything. He felt he had to come back to the world' (p. 70). Only at the close of the novel can Patrick and Clara be successfully reunited in the community, as he sets off with Hana 'to guide Clara back to this street' (p. 244). Patrick and Clara have never lived on this street, nor does Clara know Hana, so the connection is hardly a temporal one. Rather, it is the space of the community that is important, as is illustrated by the seemingly trivial details Patrick observes as he prepares to drive. Speaking to Clara on the telephone for the first time in years, shortly before he leaves to collect her, he states for the first time that he is Hana's father. This statement of connection allows the reinstatement of a domestic unit within the community, despite its devastation after Alice's death and Patrick's imprisonment. That it continues to exist is demonstrated in Ondaatje's next novel, *The English Patient*, in which Hana eventually returns to her stepmother, Clara, after Patrick's death. However, Patrick's lonely death and Hana's alienation during the experience of war as documented in *The English Patient* serves as a reminder of the fragility of such community and the need to continually re-establish a map of relationships.

Despite the narrative's emphasis on the production of Canada through immigration, Ondaatje also documents the desire of some groups to establish a

hierarchical definition of Canadian spaces which establishes certain representations of Canada as dominant. Recent immigrants to Toronto do not possess the economic strength of the city's dominant Anglo-Canadian groups, and are victims of the attempts of the dominant group to establish their discourse as superior. Prejudice against immigrants is rife, with laws imposed which ban public meetings by 'foreigners', such as those attended by Patrick and Alice: 'So if they speak this way in public, in *any* language other than English, they will be jailed. A rule of the city' (p. 133). Speakers of languages other than English are both excluded from public spaces and denied the opportunity to challenge the dominant forces which marginalise them by denying alternative representations of Toronto's urban environment. At the time of Patrick's release from prison, 'over 10,000 foreign-born workers had been deported out of the country' (p. 209). In designating Canada a site which privileges Anglo-Canadians, dominant groups can produce a space which cannot be represented as home by more recent immigrants.

Ondaatje challenges these dominant representations of spaces, providing a different take on the colonial narrative by documenting the interaction between the immigrant and the land in a non-dominant community. Linda Hutcheon describes the 'familiar clichés' of doubleness which accompany analyses of Canadian fiction, describing the tensions between, for example, the conflicting identities of native and coloniser and of French and English influences.¹⁷ Ondaatje's novel breaks down these binary distinctions in Canadian identities through the multiple nature of Toronto's creation. Thus, although he belongs to the privileged class of Anglo-immigrants and speaks English as his native language, Patrick remains excluded from the social and economic benefits afforded to characters such as the Director of

Public Works, Rowland Harris. During illegal political meetings, performances take place in a variety of languages, yet the audience is united by their political interests whether or not they are linguistically intelligible to each other. Patrick is 'immensely comfortable' in a room with his lover, Alice, and her friends, even though he is unable to understand much of their discussion which slips into Finnish and Macedonian (p. 133). At this time Patrick recognises 'the irony of reversals' in which it is no longer the Finnish loggers he saw as a boy who are alienated from their home environment but he himself who is the foreigner (p. 133). Most important, however, is the extent to which this rootlessness is no longer a source of isolation or trauma, but a common bond as immigrants from different countries begin to share in each others' cultural heritage through language and everyday life.

In challenging dominant constructions of Canadian space, the narrative highlights the social conflicts that can produce spaces of resistance. Ondaatje details not only the poor treatment of immigrant workers, but also the extent to which resistance operates. Before examining these strategies of resistance, however, it is necessary to analyse Ondaatje's Toronto as a site of conflict not only between dominant and immigrant ethnic groups, but the intersection of these spatial representations with those involved in work relationships.

Spaces and power: Conflicting Sites

In the Skin of a Lion focuses on Toronto as an environment which is quite literally under construction and it tells the story of the workers whose labour built the city. Real-life Toronto monuments, such as the Bloor Street Viaduct and the city's waterworks, are shown to be produced through a combination of the ideas of

planners, architects and engineers, and the physical work of those who built them. Ondaatje's depiction of Toronto highlights the complex network of social relations which produces conflicting definitions of the city's spaces. The narrative explores the extent to which resistant representations of the city can challenge the dominant. However, this process is also shown to be only partially successful, resulting in the ambivalence that characterises attempts to map spaces of resistance.

Ondaatje highlights conflicting representations of space by exposing the creation of a dominant understanding of the city which privileges certain experiences over others. The relative position of social groups in economic terms is a decisive factor in determining the exposure of individuals to dangerous spaces. The novel describes the difficult and dangerous work undertaken by the city's manual workers, the vast majority of whom are recent immigrants to Canada. On both the bridge and the waterworks building projects men are killed and injured. Patrick forces Harris to admit that in the waterworks, 'Your goddamn herringbone tiles in the toilets cost more than half our salaries put together' (p. 236). During the building of the bridge workers are reified, 'A man is an extension of hammer, drill, flame' (p. 26). This work no longer integrates the worker in the world but disassociates him from other beings. Workers in the tannery are unable to shift the smell that is attached to them even after they stop dyeing animal hides: 'What remained in the dyers' skin was the odour that no woman in bed would ever lean towards' (p. 132). Workers in the waterworks tunnel are isolated from events on the ground and Patrick describes it as 'this terrible place where he feels banished from the world' (p. 107). The degree of alienation experienced by the workers lessens their chances of producing a coherent

map of power relations in the city which would allow them to work together in order to establish resistance.

However, in contrast to his previous work, Ondaatje not only focuses explicitly on the hardships endured by his characters but also documents the acts of resistance these characters nonetheless pursue. The dominant form of spatial organisation is challenged throughout the novel, which begins with an epigraph taken from John Berger: 'Never again will a single story be told as though it were the only one'. In this respect, Ondaatje continues with themes he has already used in *Coming Through Slaughter*, which focuses on the rewriting of history to include material on figures previously largely ignored in the city's archives. The workers' experiences are not only dangerous, but are also largely hidden from public view, taking place underground or in darkness. During the course of the narrative one of the central characters, Patrick, undertakes research into the construction of the Bloor Street bridge, but discovers 'The articles and illustrations he found in the Riverdale Library depicted every detail about the soil, the wood, the weight of concrete, everything but information on those who actually built the bridge' (p. 145). Yet more sinisterly, during a confrontation with Rowland Harris, the Commissioner of Public Works who has overseen the construction of the two central projects featured in the novel, the bridge and the grand new waterworks, he is informed that there is no record kept of the men who died in the tunnels required for the works (p. 236). Ondaatje's novel reclaims the spaces of Toronto as those of workers' histories, and in so doing, emphasises the extent to which city spaces are produced through the relations between workers and other groups.

However, the novel does not deny that struggles over representations of Toronto's city spaces continue. Toronto is presented as a site of contest between the different priorities of the workers whose toil creates its structures and the bureaucrats who determine their value. Although Patrick finds no record of it, the workers who build the Bloor Street bridge enact their own opening ceremony before the official one:

The previous midnight the workers had arrived and brushed away officials who guarded the bridge in preparation for the ceremonies the next day, moved with their own flickering lights – their candles for the bridge dead – like a wave of civilization, a net of summer insects over the valley. (p. 27)

The flickering lights establish a narrative link to the Finnish loggers whom Patrick sees as a boy carrying torches, also reclaiming space as their own at night as they skate on ice in the forest, celebrating this experience despite being displaced from their own communities (p. 21). However, the ambiguity of Ondaatje's comparisons in the final line demonstrates the uncertainty that remains in his portrayal of resistance. The positive image of 'a wave of civilization' emphasises the extent to which Canada is created through its immigrant population not in spite of them. Yet the 'net of summer insects' is a more problematic image, which suggests the alienation of the workers from those dominant in power relations through the refusal of the latter to engage in dialogue with those whom they have largely silenced. The ambiguity of this image precludes any straightforward reclaiming of such histories and political power.

While resistance remains compromised in the novel, the dominant system is also portrayed ambivalently. The dominant is represented by the character of Harris,

and Ondaatje's fictional portrayal of this real-life figure demonstrates the extent to which his is a privileged knowledge of the city, whilst simultaneously challenging this knowledge by representing that which escapes it. The development of the city is Harris's 'dream': he claims that he has dreamt of plans for the city that have previously been rejected as too ambitious, of which the bridge and the waterworks, 'are just a hint of what could have been done here' (p. 237). However, the construction of these projects does occur according to Harris's vision: the bridge 'goes up in a dream', while the tunnels of the waterworks are 'the small world of Rowland Harris' dream' (p. 26; p. 111). Toronto is envisaged according to the maps he has created: 'Before the real city could be seen it had to be imagined, the way rumours and tall tales were a kind of charting' (p. 29). However, as the ambivalence of 'rumours and tall tales' suggests, Harris's vision is not incontestable; clearly these tales can mutate in the telling and be joined by other versions of the city. It is as a result of this changeability that Harris's maps of the city are never absolute.

As Susan Spearey writes, Harris's singular vision requires that he 'links his blueprints for the future Toronto to a mental map of the existing city,' and, 'that this mental map reflects an uncontested and *a priori* reality'.¹⁸ Spearey's observation highlights the extent to which the two aspects of Harris's vision are finally incompatible. He requires that the city can be modified according to his own specifications but is unprepared for the inevitable modifications which will take place on the subsequent instigation of others. He quotes Baudelaire, who states that, 'The form of a city changes faster than the heart of a mortal,' but can conceive of this process only according to the reality of his own mental maps of the city (*In the Skin of a Lion*, p. 109). That this is not an 'uncontested and *a priori* reality' is

demonstrated by the extent to which the spaces in which he invests escape this mapping process. A lone cyclist pedals across the bridge before the official opening ceremony, and the men who built it make their own procession the night before. During their final confrontation, Patrick reveals that political meetings were held in the unfinished waterworks to the bemusement of the commissioner, whose questions, 'What meetings? What do you mean?' are never answered (p. 239). Harris's cognitive map of the city is never of its totality, as the potential for spaces such as the waterworks to be represented as sites of resistance continues.

Moreover, not only are Harris's maps incomplete, his position in power relations is shown to be in a degree of flux. His wealth and influence are apparent, and set him apart from the disadvantaged immigrant workers. Yet he believes 'those with real power had nothing to show for themselves. They had paper. They didn't carry a cent. Harris was an amateur in their midst. He had to sell himself every time' (p. 242). The establishing of his map of the city as the most accurate representation of its reality is continually under threat. For all the money spent on aesthetic features and the cruel treatment of the workers, Harris's project is of benefit to the city in practical terms. Harris 'was a man who understood the continuity of the city, the daily consumptions of water,' and the many technical necessities of the modern city (p. 110). Patrick plans to dynamite the waterworks after he has finally confronted Harris, who recognises that he is looking for 'a villain' (p. 237). The novel emphasises that the network of power relations invoked in Toronto is far more complex and ambiguous. While the treatment of the workers under Harris cannot be evaded, the commissioner confounds the expectations of the narrative by refusing to turn Patrick over to the authorities when he has the chance and providing medical

attention for him instead. The reasons for these actions are never provided, leaving an ambiguity in Harris's role in the power relations of the novel.

The novel documents the partial success of the workers' resistance movements and the extent to which the histories of these groups can be reclaimed. New spaces can be created by workers, as the story of Nicholas Temelcoff, the Macedonian immigrant who is a central figure in the building of the bridge, demonstrates. As a worker, he is vital for his knowledge and subsequent control of space. He 'does not really need to see things, he has charted all that space,' through his familiarity with both the physical environment and the time it takes him to cross certain sections of it (p. 35). The narrator continues, 'Black space is time. After swinging for three seconds he puts his feet up to link with the concrete edge of the next pier. He knows his position in the air as if he is mercury slipping across a map' (p. 35). His conception of time allows him to map his own position in this threatening environment while, as the image of the shape-shifting mercury suggests, his own adaptability allows him to move across this environment and survive. However, at this point, despite his knowledge of space and movement, he has 'no portrait of himself' and is isolated from the other workers on the bridge, despite their respect for him (p. 42). While he does not differentiate himself from the physical space around him, this is on the principle that he is invisible to others and is oblivious that his behaviour is apparent: 'As with sight, because Nicholas does not listen to most conversations around him, he assumes no one hears him' (p. 43). Having left his country and people behind, it is linking the self he is fully conscious of in physical space to the community around him that is most troubling: 'For Nicholas language is much more difficult than what he does in space' (p. 43). Despite his familiarity with

the spaces in which he works, Nicholas is unable to map his position socially, in terms of the social relations around him. Consequently, without a cognitive map of the social production of his work environment, he is unable to resist the dangerous conditions in which he is forced to work.

Nicholas's understanding of the spaces of Toronto illustrates the complex relationship of power and knowledge which produces a dominant discourse of space. Regardless of his solitary nature, he is fully aware of the power relations that surround him:

He knows Harris. He knows Harris by the time it takes him to walk the sixty-four feet six inches from sidewalk to sidewalk on the bridge and by his expensive tweed coat that cost more than the combined weeks' salaries of five bridge workers. (p. 43)

His knowledge of the environment also surpasses that of the dominant forces in power relations. The narrator notes, 'He knows the panorama of the valley better than any engineer. Like a bird. Better than Edmund Burke, the bridge's architect, or Harris, better than the surveyors of 1912 when they worked blind through the bush' (p. 49). Nicholas's situation demonstrates that knowledge does not automatically lead to power; rather it is the type of knowledge validated in a given society – in this case that of the architect, engineer or politician – that is the greatest indicator of power relations.

The transformation of Nicholas's experience into one which can successfully challenge dominant representations of space occurs when he begins to map his environment in terms of social relations. Initially, he begins to identify with others in order to form a community. He rescues a nun who has fallen from the bridge, and who is later revealed as Patrick's partner, Alice. From being viewed as 'a recluse' on

the bridge, his experience with the nun alters his perception of the world (p. 47).

Ondaatje writes:

When he walks into the fresh air outside the Ohrida Lake Restaurant, on the morning after the accident on the bridge, he sees the landscape as something altered, no longer so familiar that it is invisible to him. Nicholas Temelcoff walks now seeing Parliament Street from the point of view of the woman. (p. 48)

Through this newly realised connection with another person, Nicholas can no longer ignore the environment that surrounds him. Interestingly, this transition is associated with his own transformation into a successful member of the community; this section closes with the lines: 'In a year he will open a bakery with the money he has saved. He releases the catch on the pulley and slides free of the bridge' (p. 49). Clearly his previous position, in which he does not dissociate himself from his harsh environment and so accepts his conditions without question, suggests that the absence of mapping strategies in such complete identification with the environment is indeed politically crippling. Only by conceptualising, or mapping, his surroundings can Nicholas gain freedom from the enslavement to capital represented by the bridge.

Nicholas's history contains the roots of the resistance that later sections of the novel document. Comparing Nicholas's knowledge with that of the surveyors demonstrates that dominant representations of space cannot encapsulate all the experiences of such a site. The close of the chapter detailing the construction of the bridge shows Nicholas about to create new spaces of immigrant experience which are beyond the planners of the bridge. He frees himself not only from the bridge itself, but from the dominant definition of the space of Toronto as one from which he is alienated, as he gradually becomes settled in his new country, learning the

language while maintaining his native tongue, and becoming an established figure in the newly created immigrant community. This community continues to be centred on the more recent Eastern European immigrants rather than their Anglo counterparts, and offers a new knowledge of Toronto. Once again the dispossessed immigrant is associated with light: 'He came to this country like a torch on fire and he swallowed air as he walked forward and he gave out light. Energy poured through him' (p. 149). Patrick's research results in Nicholas's ability to rejoin the past and the present and begin narrative: 'Patrick's gift, that arrow into the past, shows him the wealth in himself, how he has been sewn into history. Now he will begin to tell stories' (p. 149). Through Nicholas, the immigrant worker's role in creating Toronto is reclaimed.

Acts of resistance occur through the development of spaces in which labourers and their families can work together. Most notably, meetings of predominantly immigrant workers are held within the waterworks many of them are employed in building, without the knowledge of the works' directors. This space provides a forum in which strategies of resistance can be coordinated, and also reflects a wider understanding of the new spaces of Toronto in the workers' communities. Workers are able to overcome the alienation of their labour and the cultural and linguistic differences that separate them to identify and map common experiences of the city's spaces and become political agents. Moreover, their use of the waterworks transforms this space from the site of their marginalisation into dangerous, and often hidden, work, to a place in which their labour can be mobilised to resist this dominant definition.

Ambiguity is apparent throughout the novel's treatment of the political issues of conflicting representations of space. Susan Spearey makes the valuable observation that there is no teleological Marxist vision in the novel, which does not depict any overthrow of the dominant capitalist system, despite the documented exploitation of its workers.¹⁹ Nor does the novel depict any possibility of simply overturning the system; despite the sympathetic treatment of the characters involved, many of the revolutionary actions they undertake do more harm than good, as Alice's death and Patrick's imprisonment demonstrate. Ondaatje's maps of the conflicting spatial representations that are possible in Toronto demonstrate a more ambivalent form of resistance, which remains aware of its own limitations, and tends to work more successfully on the smaller scale of the community.

As the transient and rootless existence of many of the characters demonstrates, the mapping strategies Ondaatje adopts must reflect the changeable and fragile nature of the Toronto community. The character of Caravaggio, the Italian-American thief and friend of Patrick, demonstrates the continual potential for escape within these fictional maps. Just as Temelcoff's story prefigures Patrick's, the story of Caravaggio is foreshadowed by that of Clara's millionaire lover, Ambrose Small, and his mysterious disappearance. With his enormous wealth he buys houses under pseudonyms all over the country, claiming, 'I'm a thief [...] all thieves must plan their escape routes' (p. 58). While Ambrose's withdrawal from the world leads him into violence and madness more reminiscent of Buddy Bolden than anything else in this novel of community, the more positive aspects of his principles are embodied by Caravaggio. Caravaggio conceptualises space by his ability to move through it: he 'looked at architecture with a perception common to thieves who saw cupboards as

having weak backs, who knew fences were easier to go through than over' (p. 183).

He embodies a more fluid approach to mapping spaces:

Landscape for Caravaggio was never calm. A tree bending with difficulty, a flower thrashed by wind, a cloud turning black, a cone falling – everything moved anguished at separate speeds. When he ran he saw it all. The eye splintering into fifteen sentries, watching every approach. (p. 183)

Spearey contrasts Caravaggio's recognition of the various forces operating within space with Patrick's earlier attempt to control it whilst blindfold, which results in his accidentally knocking Clara down (pp. 80-1).²⁰ Moreover, Caravaggio is, consequently, able to adapt to the changeable nature of the environment around him.

Ondaatje's refusal to condemn the thief's actions are also symptomatic of his rejection of overtly politicised cartographies. While Caravaggio's theft of the property of the rich can be seen as consistent with the novel's critique of their treatment of workers, his actions are not utilised as part of a political agenda. In contrast, 'As a thief he had a sense of the world which was limited to what existed for twenty feet around him' (p. 189). Caravaggio's strength is that he can adapt to a changeable environment, even escaping from prison by being painted blue to match the roof on which he is working with Patrick (p. 179). Yet, his success precludes him from creating any map on which he himself can appear:

The houses in Toronto he had helped build or paint or break into were unmarked. He would never leave his name where his skill had been. He was one of those who have a fury or a sadness of only being described by someone else. A tarrer of roads, a house-builder, a painter, a thief – yet he was invisible to all around him. (p. 199)

Caravaggio's fear of being described, or mapped, by others leaves him politically ambiguous through his refusal to map a totality of which he must necessarily be a part. Caravaggio's reappearance in *The English Patient* continues this disassociated, non-aligned role and the refusal of the narrative to choose between this position and the striving for community of Patrick and Alice is reflected in the structure of both novels.

Mapping in the Desert: *The English Patient*

The English Patient also demonstrates the ambiguity of mapping. The novel is set in a villa in Tuscany at the end of World War Two, in which four very different characters are brought together. Two characters reappear from *In the Skin of a Lion*, offering continuity from Ondaatje's previous novel. Hana, now in her early twenties, is a nurse with one remaining patient, a mysterious burned man who appears to be English but is later revealed to be Almásy, a Hungarian working for the Germans.²¹ Caravaggio is a former spy for the Allies, who has been tortured by the Germans, while the fourth member of their community is Kirpal, a young Indian bomb disposal expert. The multicultural nature of this community of displaced persons creates an alternative space within the spaces of war, which is analysed in the next section of this chapter.

This section focuses on the other major spatial presence in the novel: the desert. As he lies dying in the Italian villa, the English patient recollects the decade he spent involved in expeditions through the deserts of North Africa. At this time he is part of a loose grouping of European men who are involved in charting the landscape, wildlife and people of the desert. These men are concerned both with

scientific findings and with the discovery of lost sites of desert legend. The often harsh conditions that the explorers endure are testament to the peculiar attachment that each feels to the desert, which often leads to a strong degree of identification with the landscape.

However, despite their love of the desert and their undoubted erudition, men such as the English patient are nonetheless representatives of a dominant colonial power, concerned with mapping the desert according to their own concerns. The desert is a space produced for European colonisers by the social relations which allow them to explore, chart, and fight on this space, which ultimately becomes a battlefield for opposing colonial powers in World War Two. The novel explores the ways in which the space of the desert is produced by colonial relations and highlights the extent to which the desert continues to escape this process of definition. It also focuses on the English patient's ambivalent role as the explorer who resists, but ultimately reinforces European empire-building. This occurs in spite of his reported attempts to develop new strategies of mapping which go beyond the colonialist charting of which he is so much a part.

The sections of *The English Patient* in which the patient describes events in Cairo emphasise the colonial construction of North African spaces. Ondaatje's narrative, published in 1992, depicts a colonial setting which recalls the tradition of English colonial writing. Egyptians are almost entirely absent, while predominantly British expatriates enjoy decadent evenings of dancing and drinking. Geoffrey Clifton's opening line, 'I name this site the Bir Messaha Country Club,' illustrates succinctly this tendency, designating a site of Arab history an upper-class European place of entertainment (p. 142). Many of the explorers, including the patient, distance

themselves, intellectually if not in practice, from this behaviour, on account of their greater erudition. However, they, too, are involved in the production of colonial spaces. The patient mentions Cairo marketplaces and alludes to his trips into the backstreets without going into details of what he does there. However, there are suggestions that in these streets are opportunities for Western men comparable with Said's conception of the Orient as 'a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe'.²² Whether these streets are places of sexual experimentation, drug use or voyeurism, they provide men such as the patient with spaces in which they can escape the social restrictions of European life, while still retaining the privileged social status their colonial identities confer in allowing them mobility in and out of such spaces.

The patient's experience of North Africa demonstrates the desire of the colonists to create a new space in which they can escape the strictures of European society. However, it also reveals the extent to which the production of this space relied on the expatriates' privileged position within the social relations of colonialism. Despite this colonial background of the explorers' work, the 'desert Europeans' distinguish themselves from mainstream European society, and use their identification with the nomadic spaces of the desert to absolve themselves of social norms (p. 135). During his time in Cairo, the English patient retains this desert identity within city spaces, refusing the world of domesticity: 'In his rooms maps cover the walls. And in spite of his attempts at furnishing there is still a sense of base camp to his quarters' (p. 153). The narrator notes that the men involved are uncomfortable 'with the etiquette of taxis, the quick, flat wit of bus conductors,' and 'are often lost, tickets misplaced,' when travelling through London (p. 133). The

patient observes that his group of explorers must seem strange to other Europeans: 'We seemed to be only interested in things that could not be bought or sold, of no interest to the outside world. We argued about latitudes, or about an event that had happened seven hundred years earlier' (p. 143). However, the determination of the explorers to distinguish themselves from European society denies the impact of their place in social relations on the spaces with which they identify. This lack of concern with material goods is, of course, easier for those, such as the explorers, who come from financially secure backgrounds and appear not to need to earn money. Despite their apparent disdain for things that could be bought or sold, then, the explorers are very much part of a social system of power relations which allows them freedom to move through the spaces they occupy.

The European explorers produce the spaces of the desert by mapping them. The patient states, 'Look at the map of the Libyan Desert and you will see names' (p. 136). These names are, of course, those of European men rather than any adopted by the desert's nomadic tribes. The patient relates the desire of his companions to have wildlife, geographical features and even tribes named after them (p. 139). The explorers differentiate themselves from colonial decadence on the grounds of scientific rationality, yet the novel demonstrates the extent to which their naming and charting of the desert is equally a production of a colonial space.

These explorers give their production of desert spaces an apparent political neutrality such as that described by Lefebvre: 'the fact that space should thus become *classificatory* makes it possible for a certain type of non-critical thought simply to register the resultant "reality" and accept it at face value'.²³ The desert allows the explorers to avoid the realities of their own societies, as the patient notes of his

closest companion, Madox, who commits suicide on hearing of the outbreak of war on his return to England. He observes 'Maybe the desert spoiled Madox. That time when we had nothing to do with the world' (p. 242). However, this elides the extent to which the explorers are involved in producing this world of territorial conflict through their charting of desert spaces. The truth of the European explorers' role in colonial politics finally becomes apparent to the English patient, who asks, 'This country – had I charted it and turned it into a place of war?' (p. 260). His surprise displays a naivety which is unlikely for an educated man who is fully aware of Europe's colonial interests in the area. He recognises that 'Both armies would come through the desert with no sense of what it was', yet fails to see that the relations of war enacted on the desert are a part of the identity bestowed on the desert by colonial powers (p. 257). '*The deserts of Libya*,' he muses, 'Remove politics, and it is the loveliest phrase I know' (p. 257). The patient here assumes a position of political neutrality which is impossible to achieve. Rather, his assumption points to the eliding of political responsibility which allows the colonial powers to claim their own definitions of desert spaces as neutral.

Importantly, the patient's apparent surprise at the outbreak of war in the desert he has charted cannot disguise the violence which is not just possible within, but is actively brought about by colonial control of spaces. Lefebvre argues that within the abstract space of scientific mapping, 'violence does not always remain latent or hidden'. He continues, suggesting that there is a contradiction between 'the appearance of security,' of such abstract space, 'and the constant threat, and indeed the occasional eruption, of violence'.²⁴ Despite the commitment of the explorers to scientific, rational investigation of desert spaces, the end product of their work is

war. The patient uses his skills to guide a German spy through the desert, and to describe European weaponry to the Bedouin who rescue him. Moreover, while the explorers do not consider themselves engaged in violent or politically significant processes, their status as colonisers allows them to abuse the native inhabitants of the area. A particularly shocking incident occurs as he visits the tent of a fellow-explorer and discovers a young Arab girl tied up in the bed. Also visible at this scene is a photograph of the explorer's family. The male colonist can move between the spaces of English familial respectability and those of his own sexual freedom in the colonies. Elizabeth Kella argues that the juxtaposition of the patient's own behaviour with that of his companion suggests a more benign form of colonial practice.²⁵ However, while there is no suggestion that the patient condones the sexual abuse of native children, there is also no attempt on his part to stop such actions, and he remains knowingly complicit in the violence that results from colonialism.

Several critics have noted the link between the patient and his companions, and Western power in general. Lorna Irvine argues that the novel explores colonial history and that the patient 'is himself a condensation of Western history,' as his fixation with the work of Herodotus, a much earlier European explorer, demonstrates.²⁶ Similarly, Kella suggests that 'Western humanist civilization,' is 'personified by the English patient,' and that it is this state which the novel challenges.²⁷ As colonial mapmakers, the explorers are implicated in the production of a colonial space which becomes the site of a European war, one of the 'terrors' that Lyotard sees as resulting from these social relations.²⁸ A postcolonial response to this colonial process is discussed through the character of Kirpal in the following section.

Ondaatje's narrative is critical of the colonial production of desert spaces, but also highlights the extent to which these representations can be challenged. The English patient realises that colonising powers will never gain complete control of space, declaring, 'the ends of the earth are never the points on the map that colonists push against, enlarging their sphere of influence' (p. 141). One reason for the inability of the explorers to map the desert definitively lies in its geographical nature. After each sandstorm, 'the surface of the desert was changed' (p. 137). Navigations must be completed over terrain which is itself constantly shifting: 'Here in the desert, which had been an old sea when nothing was strapped down or permanent, everything drifted' (p. 22). However, in their attempts to document the history and geography of the desert, the explorers continue to search for evidence which will provide a fixed record of the space. The Europeans are fascinated by the inaccessibility of a history which has left no physical signs: 'in the emptiness of deserts you are always surrounded by lost history' (p. 135). They cannot, however, accept this emptiness but attempt to discover evidence in the form of cave paintings or wells; the patient's most famous expedition is in order to discover a lost oasis city.

Despite the occasional success of these expeditions, the native inhabitants employ an alternative system of mapping which produces a different space within the territory of the desert. The patient is aware that there are alternative representations of the desert:

The desert could not be claimed or owned – it was a piece of cloth carried by winds, never held down by stones, and given a hundred shifting names long before Canterbury existed, long before battles and treaties quilted Europe and the East. (pp. 138-9)

Even the most dedicated explorers have only the most partial knowledge of the desert and its history: 'This was a world that had been civilized for centuries, had a thousand paths and roads' (p. 140). These thousands of paths and roads represent the multiple possibilities of travelling the space of the desert and, as the nomadic tradition of the desert tribes ensures, of the lack of fixity that is accepted by those journeying through desert spaces. The spaces produced by social relations in the desert are ones which accept transience; the patient describes the 'caravans like cities' which continually cross the changing spaces of the desert (p. 168).²⁹ Talking to an old tribesman he realises the man will not enlighten him further as to the desert's nature: 'The Senussi creed, their foremost doctrine, is still not to reveal the secrets of the desert to strangers' (p. 140). As Kella observes, 'in spite of [the English patient's] vast knowledge of and apparent intimacy with the desert, the peoples who actually inhabit it know more and identify him as an outsider'.³⁰

This outsider status becomes politically significant when the desert becomes a space of European war. Before the outbreak of World War Two, the patient associates the desert with a rejection of the divisions of nationality. From the perspective of the nomadic desert tribes, he recognises, the national differences of the explorers are 'insignificant' (p. 138). Initially, the explorers create their own society: 'We were the small clutch of a nation between the wars, mapping and re-exploring. We gathered at Dakhla and Kufra as if they were bars or cafés. An oasis society, Bagnold called it' (p. 136). Eventually, however, the explorers wish to leave even the gathering points of oasis in an attempt to inhabit the fluid space of the desert:

All of us, even those with European homes and children in the distance, wished to remove the clothing of our countries. It was a place of faith. We disappeared into landscape. Fire and sand. We left the harbours of oasis. The places water came to and touched...*Ain, Bir, Wadi, Foggara, Khottara, Shaduf*. I didn't want my name against such beautiful names. Erase the family name! Erase nations! I was taught such things by the desert. (p. 139)

However, once again, the Europeans cannot so simply reject the dominant systems of spatial and social relations of which they are a part.

The patient's desire to 'erase names' is applied only selectively. He denies that he has any desire to have areas of exploration named after him: 'some wanted their mark there. [...] But I wanted to erase my name and the place I had come from' (p. 139). However, an earlier section of the novel reveals that his name, Almásy, is indeed attached to the desert: 'Look at a map of the Libyan desert and you will see names. [...] Almásy-Madox 1931-1937. Just north of the Tropic of Cancer' (p. 136).³¹ Searching for help for his former lover, Katherine, whom he has left seriously injured in the desert, he refuses to tell the British authorities her name, referring to her only as his wife. Mistrusting his Hungarian name, he is interned and help for Katherine is denied. The patient erases only Katherine's married name, and the pride which causes him to claim her under his own name causes her death. This incident provokes him into working for the Germans during the war. He suggests that 'By the time war arrived, after ten years in the desert, it was easy for me to slip across borders, not to belong to anyone, to any nation' (p. 139). Certainly he has a fluidity of movement in the desert that allows him to evade capture, while even Caravaggio takes time to consider that the patient might be 'Sansom', another agent very similar to Almásy, but one who is working for the British. Nonetheless, in working for the Nazis, he can hardly be said to be working against national and racial divisions.

Throughout the novel, the English patient attempts to escape the social relations which define spaces by adopting a more fluid identity inspired by the desert. He describes his aim as a new system of mapping:

I believe in such cartography – to be marked by nature, not just to label ourselves on a map like the names of rich men and women on buildings. We are communal histories, communal books. We are not owned or monogamous in our taste or experience. All I desired was to walk on such an earth that had no maps. (p. 261)

Here he distinguishes this new ‘cartography’ from the system of mapping which he has previously furthered. Maps have been central to his vocation as an explorer: ‘When I was lost among them, unsure of where I was, all I needed was the name of a small ridge, a local custom, a cell of this historical animal, and the map of the world would slide into place’ (p. 19). However, in the aftermath of his relationship with Katherine, he begins to wish for a more comprehensive method of conceptualising spatial relations. He notes, ‘you do not find adultery in the minutes of the Geographical Society. Our room never appears in the detailed reports which chartered every knoll and every incident of history’ (p. 145). Nonetheless, it later becomes apparent that his relationship with Katherine has been charted by British Intelligence, sensitive to the impending war. The patient describes this as ‘the great English web’, or a system of social and power relations which continues to produce the conditions for even the most personal spaces (p. 237).

The patient’s ‘earth that had no maps’ is inspired by the desert and its smooth space, yet this space is shaped by the social relations of the explorers and their privileging of historical sites and charting. He observes, ‘I am a man whose life in many ways, even as an explorer, has been governed by words. By rumours and

legends. Charted things. Shards written down. The tact of words' (p. 231). The 'charted things' of maps and texts are distinguished from the territory itself, and he becomes increasingly concerned with demolishing that distinction in order to establish a space which can evade the social relations that are inevitably involved in maps and texts. Writing a short book, the patient finds himself 'coming closer and closer to the text as if the desert were there somewhere on the page' (p. 235). He articulates his feeling of truly belonging in the nomadic space of the desert through the breakdown of the distinction between space and representation: 'It was as if he had walked under the millimetre of haze just above the inked fibres of a map, that pure zone between land and chart between distances and legend between nature and storyteller' (p. 246). Nonetheless, the patient cannot escape the power relations which inscribe the desert as a space of war.

For the patient, the desert becomes a chance to create his own history, just as Herodotus does in the volume which he carries with him. He describes Herodotus as 'one of those spare men of the desert who travel from oasis to oasis, trading legends as if it is the exchange of seeds, consuming everything without suspicion, piecing together a mirage' (pp. 118-19). This description, of course, is also applicable to the patient himself, who creates his own mirage as he obscures his identity. Importantly, however, this mirage identity cannot obscure the reality of the spatial relations of war, of which he has been a part. The desert becomes a space created by the patient's narrative, which at times disassociates itself from actual consequences: 'He assumed he was experienced in the ways of the world he had essentially left years earlier, struggling ever since to explore a half-invented world of the desert' (p. 150). Hana observes that he is 'still in Africa' (p. 33). Morphine 'races in him, imploding time

and geography the way maps compress the world onto a two-dimensional sheet of paper' (p. 161). As Rufus Cook notes in an essay which takes its name from this extract, 'the English patient is adept at collapsing temporal and spatial distinctions', as his use of Herodotus as contemporary reference material demonstrates.³² To a certain extent, the patient is successful in his bid to create a more fluid identity and deny the impact of origins on his relationship with the spaces he inhabits. Hana and Caravaggio continue to refer to him as the English patient on the grounds that 'it no longer matters which side he was on during the war' (p. 251). However, as the reality of the war which has taken him physically from the desert continues, this more fluid environment is one which can only exist within the patient's mind. Listening to his story, Caravaggio realises, 'this is the world of nomads in any case, an apocryphal story. A mind travelling east and west in the disguise of sandstorm' (p. 248). Only in the patient's narrative can such alternative maps of the desert be established.

The final section of this chapter investigates whether the type of narrative map established by the patient can challenge the dominant system of social relations by producing new conceptions of space. *The English Patient's* other main setting, the Italian villa, is also the site of an alternative form of spatial organisation. Ondaatje's narrative depicts the villa as a retreat from politics and war, and explores whether the characters can develop new spatial relations that are not compromised by the social relations of war and colonialism that produce the spaces around them.

Narrating the Villa

Perhaps this villa is a similar tableau, the four of them in private movement, momentarily lit up, flung ironically against this war. (p. 278)

The villa, as a space of retreat in the aftermath of World War Two, is characterised by being distinct from the world around it. Each of the four inhabitants has been injured, physically or mentally, by the experiences of the war. Hana is diagnosed by former colleagues as having ‘partial shell shock probably,’ before she rejects her orders to move north with the rest of her hospital (p. 28). She observes the way nurses such as herself, ‘broke the way a man dismantling a mine broke the second his geography exploded’ (p. 41). This image highlights the loss of spatial awareness that prohibits the individual from locating herself in an environment so riven by conflict. Hana rejects the authority of those who appear to control the social relations that lead to war: ‘She would not be ordered again or carry out duties for the greater good’ (p. 14). Instead, she creates her own ordered universe in the villa, establishing a garden and even taming a small square of the overgrown grass that Caravaggio observes she has snipped neatly with her nail scissors. Rather than designate herself a bedroom, ‘She herself preferred to be nomadic in the house with her pallet or hammock’, and was living like a vagrant’ (pp. 13-14). Hana’s newly created space can co-exist with the others: ‘She was secure in the miniature world she had built; the two other men seemed distant planets, each in his own sphere of memory and solitude’ (p. 47). This occurs as Hana’s ‘miniature world’ is not one which depends on her establishing hierarchical or fixed relationships. The villa becomes a space in which social relations which differ from those of the conflict outside are enacted.

In contrast to the war, fought between national entities, it is displacement from established communities which provides the common bond between the characters. The English patient covers his Hungarian origins until Caravaggio concedes, 'it no longer matters which side he was on during the war' (p. 251). Hana asks herself, 'Where was and what was Toronto anymore in her mind?' (p. 50). No longer associating themselves with their Canadian home, neither she nor Caravaggio can identify with their European home either: 'Who knew what country the war had made him live in' (p. 49). Hana observes of the four individuals in the villa, 'now there is hardly a world around them and they are forced back on themselves' (p. 40). The organisation of space on national principles has led to war and the villa offers opportunities for new mappings to be developed.

This new system of mapping is developed as an understanding of the spatial relationships of the villa's inhabitants which differs from the dominant discourses of nationalism and colonialism which have shaped their world. On this point, my analysis differs from that of Elizabeth Kella, who associates the retreat of the characters into the villa with an individualism which is at odds with the anti-humanism she sees in the novel's critique of imperialism. She argues:

The need to retreat into the purely private in order to rediscover one's fundamental human "character" is understood and respected by the other self-imposed exiles, all of whom are engaged in that process. Healing is presented as a dialectical process that involves the recovery of an essential self and a move toward dialogue, desire and essential community.³³

However, Ondaatje's narrative does not attempt to recover 'essential' characters, but rather highlights the ways in which the characters have been shaped by their environments. Kella uses a comment attributed to Caravaggio who has previously

imagined Hana as an adult, 'but had invented someone with qualities moulded out of her community. Not this wonderful stranger he could love more deeply because she was made up of nothing he had provided' (pp. 222-3). Kella argues that Hana therefore creates 'an essential self untouched by the feuds of the world'.³⁴ Yet Kella's comment elides the extent to which it is the changes in Hana's environment which have encouraged these changes in her character. Caravaggio cannot see the influence of her Toronto upbringing largely because of her responses to the warzones of Europe which have latterly been her home. Moreover, while the villa is a space in which new identities and relationships are mapped, there is nothing essential or fixed about their organisation. The villa community is based throughout on a transient arrangement: the patient will die, Hana will no longer be required to nurse him, and the sapper's work in the area will be completed.

The structure of the villa itself reflects this transient mapping, as a space which is both porous and fragmented. It is differentiated from the norms of Western habitation as it has been extensively shelled and is largely open to the elements: 'Some rooms faced onto the valley with no walls at all. [Hana] would open a door and see just a sodden bed huddled against a corner, covered with leaves. Doors opened into landscape. Some rooms had become an open aviary' (p. 13). Despite offering a retreat from the experiences of war for Hana and the others, the house is far from safe and they continue to walk on areas which carry the risk of mines. Hana associates the dangerous and forbidden spaces of the villa with the gaps in the plots of the books she reads to the English patient, 'like sections of a road washed out by storms, missing incidents as if locusts had consumed a section of tapestry, as if plaster loosened by the bombing had fallen away from a mural at night' (p. 7).

Ondaatje's story also follows this structure, with fractured chronology and gaps in the narrative that remain inconclusive. The structure of the villa parallels the fragmentation that characterises the existence of the four characters, all of whom have corresponding gaps in their own histories.

However, the fragmented space of the villa also reflects the social conflicts that have been enacted on sites all over Europe, North Africa and Asia during the war. Consequently, the villa offers both an escape from the societies which have produced the spaces of conflict, and a constant reminder that these spaces, and these conflicts continue to exist and encroach on the villa. This dichotomy is played out throughout the exploration of the villa's spaces in the novel, which depicts a new form of mapping spatial relationships which is nonetheless drawn back into the system of social conflicts which it attempts to escape.

Despite the encroachment of the natural world of elements and plants into the villa, the characters appear to remain isolated from the Italian environment around them. Although Hana, Caravaggio and Kip all venture into the local village from time to time, these journeys are rarely reported in the narrative, which confines its depiction of the present of the novel to the grounds of the villa, much as the English patient is himself confined. There is no news of the war, or political events in the outside world. The spatial isolation of the villa also appears to offer a chance to disassociate from the spatial relations of their respective communities. Again, however, this situation is a temporary retreat. During a party the four characters hold in the English patient's room, complete with music, dancing and wine, there is no obvious connection between this space and the world: 'From a greater distance there was nothing here that belonged to the outside world [...] Just fifty yards away, there

had been no representation of them in the world, no sight or sound of them from the valley's eye' (p. 112). Nonetheless, in order to maintain the atmosphere of the party, Kirpal must deny the sound that he knows to be a bomb and slip out of the room to attend to it. The autonomy of the villa is an illusion, as the social relations of war continue to impinge on its fragile boundaries.

The disintegration of the villa community as a result of the continuing influence of social relations from outside, is presented as inevitable by Ondaatje's narrative. The alternative mappings of spatial relationships he presents exist alongside, rather than in place of, dominant representations of spaces of conflict. Hana describes the patient and Caravaggio as 'distant planets, each in his own sphere of memory and solitude,' while Kirpal is 'some kind of loose star on the edge of their system' (p. 47; p. 75). Even this image emphasises that each character, however solitary, has become a part of a system of spatial organisation. Comparing the group to the religious artwork he has seen in Italy, Kirpal considers, 'Perhaps this villa is a similar tableau, the four of them in private movement, momentarily lit up, flung ironically against this war' (p. 278). This comment highlights both the transient nature of their system, and the extent to which they remain flung against the war, unable to deny the impact of forces beyond themselves.

Despite their displacements, the characters cannot escape the political significance of their origins. The English patient states: 'Kip and I are both international bastards – born in one place and choosing to live elsewhere. Fighting to get back to or get away from our homelands all our lives' (p. 176). However international, they may leave their homelands but cannot escape the social relations which allow others to represent them by their ethnicity and national backgrounds.

The patient is refused help for Katherine on account of his Hungarian name, while Kirpal, as an Indian, is excluded from the society of the British army for whom he fights. Caravaggio notes with exasperation, 'The trouble with all of us is we are where we shouldn't be. What are we doing in Africa, in Italy? What is Kip doing dismantling bombs in orchards, for God's sake? What is he doing fighting English wars?' (p. 122). Caravaggio's reminder of the colonial relationship between the various countries the characters inhabit highlights the inequality of power relations between these spaces. The global system that has produced a World War in which citizens from Europe, North America, Asia and Africa are involved is not one in which power relations between nations are absent.

Throughout the novel, Kirpal Singh is differentiated by social relations which define his ethnicity, and this difference is enacted in space. He is repeatedly associated with the 'periphery' of spatial arrangements (p. 80; p. 218). Within the community of the villa, Kirpal remains an outsider and continues to sleep in a tent in the garden. The manner in which he interacts with others in the villa is shaped by his background as a citizen of a colonised nation. During their relationship, Hana observes that each of the spaces she and Kirpal inhabit contains 'the turbulent river of space between them' (p. 301). Kirpal also notes that 'between them lay a treacherous and complex journey. It was a very wide world' (p. 113). Hana notes that his 'self-sufficiency and privacy [...] were caused not just by his being a sapper in the Italian campaign. It was as much the result of being the anonymous member of another race, a part of the invisible world' (p. 196). This anonymity occurs through the racist assumptions of his fellow soldiers, who refuse to interact with the Indian: 'men who would not cross an uncrowded bar to speak with him when they were off

duty' (p. 196). While never overtly abusive to Kirpal, the British soldiers with whom he works are unable to place him in a field of reference in which bomb defusal experts are 'wise white fatherly men', and he remains 'the foreigner, the Sikh' (p. 105).

Various critics have noted Kirpal's 'in-betweenness' or hybrid identity.³⁵ Unlike his brother, whose anti-colonial activism has caused him to be imprisoned by the British in India, Kirpal occupies a resistant space which does not challenge dominant colonial definitions overtly. He withdraws from social conflict in order to discover 'the overlooked space open to those of us with a silent life' (p. 200). Nonetheless, he is aware of the changeable nature of spaces: 'The landscape around him is just a temporary thing, there is no permanence to it' (pp. 86-7). For Hana, this is accompanied by a personal fluidity: 'she knows this man beside her is one of the charmed, who has grown up an outsider and so can switch allegiances, can replace loss' (pp. 271-2). Kirpal's approach can unsettle Western representations of control of space. It becomes apparent that the 'system' of the villa is an environment which Kirpal can adapt to make a temporary home. Although Hana often sleeps with him in his tent, she acknowledges, 'It is his world. She feels displaced out of Canada during those nights' (p. 128). Clearly the process of displacement separating Hana from Canada has been in effect throughout the time she spends in Europe, and it appears, therefore, that in joining Kirpal in his space she is displaced not only out of Canada but more generally out of the Western world. Eventually it is not so much Kirpal that is peripheral, but his engagement with the Western world: 'The rest of us are just periphery, she thinks, his eyes are only on what is dangerous' (p. 126).

However, Kirpal's experience as a colonised subject causes him to remain distinct from the others. On hearing of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 'Kip looks condemned, separate from the world, his brown face weeping' (p. 283). It is at this point that he does separate himself from the world inhabited by the others, leaving almost immediately to return to India. Kirpal's stance is based on the assumption that the Hiroshima bombings are not an isolated action, but the culmination of Western imperialist assumptions. These have produced a map of the world which gives Western colonial powers influence not just over territories but over cultural representations of spaces. Kirpal asks, 'Was it just ships that gave you such power? Was it, as my brother said, because you had the histories and printing presses?' (p. 283). The narrative has clear points of comparison with much work in postcolonial studies, including Said's version of Orientalism, in which cultural representations help to shape colonial society. As Said argues:

when it came to who owned the land, who had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who now plans its future – these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative.³⁶

Kirpal continues, 'I grew up with traditions from my country, but later, more often, from *your* country. Your fragile white island that with customs and manners and books and prefects and reason somehow converted the rest of the world' (p. 283). Nonetheless, this force of reason contains violence: 'My brother told me. Never turn your back on Europe. The deal makers. The contract makers. The map drawers' (p. 284). Kirpal's view is compatible with Lefebvre's concept of abstract space, which is characterised by the contradiction between 'the appearance of security and the constant threat, and indeed the occasional eruption, of violence'.³⁷ Despite the

apparent retreat provided by the villa from the conflict of social relations outside, colonial relations continue to influence this space of retreat.

The dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan forces a new understanding of social and spatial relations in the global environment, raising questions of nationalism in a postcolonial context. Kirpal understands that this 'tremor of Western wisdom' would never have been unleashed on a white nation (p. 284). The bombing homogenises the West through their racist attitudes, and Kirpal threatens to shoot the English patient, despite being told he is not English: 'American, French, I don't care. When you start bombing the brown races of the world, you're an Englishman' (p. 286). The patient does not resist, and ironic version of his desire to 'erase nations' is achieved. Kip also chooses to return to his origins, gazing at a photograph of his family and thinking, 'His name is Kirpal Singh and he does not know what he is doing here' (p. 287).

Lorna Irvine writes, 'finally, then, Ondaatje is dealing with the problem of representation, of how one speaks for the other, now, when there are no more "wise white fatherly men" to assume the burden of speaking for all of us'.³⁸ Irvine's argument is convincing, and supports my conclusion that the novel does not offer a straightforward alternative system of mapping spatial relations, but, like Rushdie's fiction, engages with the representative problems that mapping strategies raise. While the blame for disastrous episodes in global relations is clearly placed in the hands of the colonisers, the novel does not provide a conclusive verdict on the means of resisting these spatial relations. Kirpal returns to India and a life in which 'At this table all of the hands are brown. They move with ease in their customs and habits' (p. 301). After his departure from the villa, Hana writes, *'From now on I believe the*

personal will forever be at war with the public. If we can rationalize this we can rationalize anything' (p. 292). This process is shown to be beyond rationalising, however, and the novel closes with a spatio-temporal link as, many years later, Hana knocks over a glass in her Canadian home, while Kirpal immediately catches a fork knocked from his table in India. Both Hana and Kirpal return to homelands from which they nonetheless cannot identify with completely: Hana, at the age of thirty-four, 'has not found her own company, the ones she wanted,' while Kirpal will always find friendship and sexual union with outsiders (p. 301).

Ondaatje's novels produce fictional maps which offer only partial and temporary representations of spaces. While his later novels demonstrate an increase in mapping strategies consistent with their increasing political commitment, they continue to foreground ambiguous representations of resistant spaces. *In the Skin of a Lion* and *The English Patient* develop the self-conscious narrative techniques of his earlier work to link the process of mapping to that of narrating. During his integration into the community and at the high point of his relationship with Alice, Patrick looks out from the home in which he will join her, noting that 'The sky looked mapped, gridded by the fire escape' (*In the Skin of a Lion*, p. 126). The local strategies of mapping proposed by the novel are always subject to change. Alice quotes her favourite lines from Conrad's letters: 'I have taught you that the sky in all its zones is mortal. ... Let me now re-emphasize the extreme looseness of the structure of all objects' (p. 135). This structural looseness is required in order to permit the multiple representations of the city space that are possible, but it also ensures that, despite the novel's laudatory presentation of the politicised community, such mapping is only ever partial.

Unlike earlier works such as *Coming Through Slaughter*, *In the Skin of a Lion* and *The English Patient* fulfil the political role of postmodern fiction identified by Hutcheon as ‘the means to a new engagement with the social and historical world’.³⁹ These novels challenge but do not simply reverse dominant representations of the city. Ondaatje makes self-conscious references to the art of storytelling in *In the Skin of a Lion*, balancing Conrad’s comments on ‘the extreme looseness of the structure of all objects’ with the statement ‘The first sentence of every novel should be: “Trust me, this will take time but there is order here, very faint, very human”’ (p. 146). The novels oscillate between extreme looseness and faint order in their drawing of conclusions only to leave other possibilities perpetually open. Ondaatje’s maps reflect his own aims: ‘*Only the best art can order the chaotic tumble of events. Only the best can realign chaos to suggest both the chaos and order it will become*’ (*In the Skin of a Lion*, p. 146). Ultimately, *In the Skin of a Lion* and *The English Patient* refuse to map a single political solution for the reader, but are instead able to map environments in a manner which reclaims lost histories, highlighting the production of national and city spaces, and the unresolved conflicts that result from differing representations of these sites. Analysis of Ondaatje’s work confirms that his narratives continually problematise the representational devices they employ and, consequently, that they demonstrate mapping strategies similar to those found in Rushdie’s fiction and theoretical work by Jameson.

¹ Michael Ondaatje, *The English Patient* (London: Picador, 1993), p. 261.

² Deborah L. Madsen, ‘Beyond the Commonwealth: Post-Colonialism and American Literature’, in *Post-Colonial Literatures: Expanding the Canon*, ed. by Deborah L. Madsen (London: Pluto Press, 1999), pp. 1-13 (p. 1).

- ³ Constance Rooke, 'Dog in a Grey Room: The Happy Ending of *Coming Through Slaughter*', in *Spider Blues: Essays on Michael Ondaatje*, ed. by Sam Solecki (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1985), pp. 268-95 (p. 291).
- ⁴ Christian Bök, 'Destructive Creation: The Politicization of Violence in the Works of Michael Ondaatje', *Canadian Literature*, 132 (1992), 109-24 (p. 119).
- ⁵ Bellocq, like Bolden, is a real-life figure, although they are unlikely ever to have met, much less to have had the friendship described.
- ⁶ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 44.
- ⁷ Linda Hutcheon, *The Canadian Postmodern: A Study of Contemporary English-Canadian Fiction* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 1.
- ⁸ W. M. Verhoeven, '(De)Facing the Self: Michael Ondaatje and (Auto)Biography', in *Postmodern Fiction in Canada*, ed. by Theo D'haen and Hans Bertens (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992), pp. 181-200 (p. 185).
- ⁹ Lorraine M. York, 'The Other Side of Dailiness': *Photography in the Works of Alice Munro, Timothy Findley, Michael Ondaatje and Margaret Laurence* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1988), p. 107.
- ¹⁰ Arun Mukherjee, *Towards an Aesthetic of Opposition: Essays on Literature, Criticism and Cultural Imperialism* (Stratford, Ontario: Williams-Wallace, 1988), p. 73.
- ¹¹ Bök, 109-24 (p. 109); Susan Ellis, 'Trade and Power, Money and War: Rethinking Masculinity in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*', *Studies in Canadian Literature*, 21.2 (1996), 22-35 (p. 25).
- ¹² Graham Huggan, *Territorial Disputes: Maps and Mapping Strategies in Contemporary Canadian and Australian Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 56.
- ¹³ Susan Spearey, 'Mapping and Masking: The Migrant Experience in Michael Ondaatje's *In the Skin of a Lion*', *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 29.2 (1994), 45-60, (p. 46).
- ¹⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 26.
- ¹⁵ Lefebvre, p. 26.
- ¹⁶ Spearey, 45-60 (p. 54).
- ¹⁷ Linda Hutcheon, in *Double Talking: Essays on Verbal and Visual Ironies in Canadian Contemporary Art and Literature*, ed. by Linda Hutcheon (Toronto: ECW Press, 1992), p. 12.
- ¹⁸ Spearey, 45-60 (p. 58).
- ¹⁹ Spearey, 45-60 (p. 49).
- ²⁰ Spearey, 45-60 (pp. 54-5).
- ²¹ On discovering the patient's identity, Hana and Caravaggio agree that it is not important. I have therefore followed the narrative in referring to the English patient, rather than Almásy. Kirpal Singh is addressed by the others as Kip, but reverts to his real name at the close of the novel and, accordingly, it is this name which I use.
- ²² Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 190.
- ²³ Lefebvre, p. 281.
- ²⁴ Lefebvre, p. 57.
- ²⁵ Kella, Elizabeth, *Beloved Communities: Solidarity and Difference in Fiction by Michael Ondaatje, Toni Morrison, and Joy Kogawa* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, Studia Anglistica Upsaliensia, 2000), p. 89.
- ²⁶ Lorna Irvine, 'Displacing the White Man's Burden in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*', *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 10.1 (1995), 139-45 (p. 142).
- ²⁷ Kella, p. 99.
- ²⁸ Jean-François Lyotard, 'Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?', trans. by Régis Durand, in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), pp. 71-82 (pp. 81-82).
- ²⁹ For an analysis of Ondaatje's depiction of the desert in conjunction with the 'smooth' space suggested by the nomadology of Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* see Annick Hillger, "'And this is the world of nomads in any case": *The Odyssey* as Intertext in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*', *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 33.1 (1998) 23-33
- ³⁰ Kella, p. 90.
- ³¹ Kella, p. 91.

³² Rufus Cook, "Imploding Time and Geography": Narrative Compressions in Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*, *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 33.2 (1998), 109-25 (pp. 110-111).

³³ Kella, p. 93.

³⁴ Kella, p. 94.

³⁵ See, for example, Cook, p. 111, and Kella, pp. 100-1.

³⁶ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. xiii.

³⁷ Lefebvre, p. 57.

³⁸ Irvine, p. 144.

³⁹ Hutcheon, *Canadian Postmodern*, p. 1.

Chapter Four: Alan Hollinghurst

I felt the place was mine, I was proud of it, and of more or less knowing my way through it. (Alan Hollinghurst)¹

At first glance, Alan Hollinghurst's novels would appear to have less incentive to develop alternative means of mapping space than those of Rushdie or Ondaatje. In contrast to the postcolonial, war-torn and poverty-stricken characters that are featured in the latter's novels, Hollinghurst's work offers first-person narratives by protagonists who appear to occupy positions more dominant in social relations. Correspondingly, the spaces represented reflect these more dominant positions. However, an analysis of his novels *The Swimming-Pool Library* and *The Folding Star*, demonstrates that his fiction does explore the relationship between space and representation that produces mapping. Both novels feature characters who are proved to be less 'knowing' than they appear with regard to their environments. Hollinghurst's work shows spaces to be produced by social relations, the complexity of which are paralleled in the spaces themselves.

The chapter begins by focusing on the production of colonial spaces in *The Swimming-Pool Library*. My analysis then uses both novels to demonstrate that the social relations which produce these spaces continue to influence the experience of European nations in contemporary times. The second half of this chapter examines the production of city spaces through the social relations that Hollinghurst depicts. Much of the critical work available considers Hollinghurst's status as a gay writer, and I have found it useful to consider this aspect of his work in relation to specifically spatial concerns. Consequently, the production of 'gay spaces' within his

work is explored, in order to establish whether these depictions can be considered as narrative maps of spaces which resist dominant representations. Throughout, Hollinghurst's novels are analysed in order to establish that they illustrate the complexity of social relations and the spaces that they produce.

Colonial Space: *The Swimming-Pool Library*

Although *The Swimming-Pool Library* is set in London in the early 1980s, much of the text is based on the diary written by an older character, Charles Nantwich, which recalls his experiences as a colonial administrator in Sudan during the 1920s. Hollinghurst uses the conventions of colonial writings, just as Rushdie does in *Midnight's Children*, to highlight a colonial production of spaces through a postcolonial narrative. However, while Rushdie is concerned with drawing maps of the postcolonial nation, Hollinghurst focuses on spatial interaction from the point of view of the coloniser. Charles's African memoirs are here examined in detail, in order to establish that a colonial process of mapping is used to define both Africans and the English. These sections of the novel highlight the extent to which the African spaces which Charles enjoys are produced by the relations of colonialism. They also demonstrate, however, the inability of colonial forces to provide a definitive representation of African spaces.

Charles's diaries recall a time when Sudan is governed by the British through their representatives in the country. As a colonial administrator in the Nuba Hills, he has jurisdiction over the local inhabitants and is provided with a house, a cook and a 'houseboy', called Taha. British control of the space extends to the daily life of the local Nubian people as social relations are regulated by men such as Charles. He is

keen to differentiate himself from previous administrators, yet his narrative continues to highlight the colonial production of the spaces which he inhabits. Arriving in Port Said, he worries about the outfit he is expected to purchase: 'I found mine uncomfortable, & was afraid it suddenly drew all the character out of my face & turned me into just another hard-hatted, heavy-handed empire-builder'.² Being identified as such an 'empire-builder' isolates Charles from the Africans he longs to meet, forcing him to 'march implacably through' the gathering of people he longs to touch and greet (p. 180). Charles recognises the inadequacies of colonial rule but is unable to conceptualise an alternative to colonialist behaviour in this space.

Despite his desire and sympathy for the African people, his benevolent self-image is often compromised. He recognises his own inexperience and inadequacy as a leader in a foreign land without ever raising the possibility that an African government is possible. His response to his power illustrates both the rhetoric of the dominant hegemony and its ambivalences, as he writes of his attempts to repel a band of local children: 'Then I felt childlike myself, very pink & white, laughable in my indignation, & my authority much too big for me, as if bought in anticipation of my "growing into it"' (p. 181). He sees that he is unfit for the task but recognises only his inexperience rather than his presence as a part of an imperial regime imposing an alien and unwelcome culture. He feels 'childlike' temporarily while the Africans he will govern presumably remain 'children' who have yet to 'grow into' the ability to govern themselves. For Charles, Sudan remains a space which is defined by colonial power relations.

Charles's narrative confirms that Sudan is mapped according to European systems of conceptualising space. He observes that 'there was a tendency to treat

Africa as if it were some great big public school' (p. 242). Looking back on his time in Sudan many years later, he realises:

it was a bizarre system, when you think about it. There was one of the vastest countries in the world, and they sent out to govern it a handful of boys each year who had never in their brief lives experienced anything remotely comparable. (p. 241)

Nonetheless, while he recognises the ludicrous nature of his position, Charles continues to view Africa as a space to be moulded by Europeans according to their own experience. In a passage which he admits is reminiscent of Joseph Conrad, he states:

But when you were out in the provinces, and on tour for weeks on end, you really felt you were somewhere else. If you'd had the wrong sort of character you could have gone bad, in that vast emptiness, or abused your power. (p. 242)

Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* famously depicts a journey into the centre of Africa in which the narrator discovers a fellow European who has indeed 'gone bad' in a situation characterised by his final dying words: 'The horror! The horror!'³ Conrad's novel does not make explicit whether this horror arises from Africa or from colonial expansion and the ambiguities of his nightmare vision of empire are paralleled in Charles's representation of the spaces of Sudan. However, Charles's narrative also follows Conrad's in representing the spaces of Africa as a background for European exploration in both a physical and mental sense. Being 'somewhere else' is inevitably a subjective designation, which depends on the designation of a position which is 'here', in this case the imperial centre. Charles is allowed to inhabit a particular colonial space which is at once removed from his native England and yet

not equivalent to the experience of his Nubian neighbours. Significantly, however, this hybridised state is available only to the colonisers, by whom it continues to be defined.

Charles's continuing belief in colonial power relations exemplifies what Lefebvre terms the 'illusion of transparency,' in which the production of space according to social forces is obscured.⁴ In refusing to conceive of an alternative to colonial rule in the area, Charles accepts the particular power relations involved as inevitable, and denies anti-colonial representations of Sudanese spaces. His own narrative questions the apparent neutrality and inevitability of colonial rule, however. Despite his desire to befriend the local people and to create a more benevolently governed space, there are constant reminders of the violence required to maintain British rule in the area. Even Charles's rejection of the horrific acts of previous British regimes betrays his continuing belief in the need for British rule:

The sheer evil of it oppressed my heart as I went through the village, putting things to right, rewarding & punishing & laying down the law. At least our justice is felt to be justice. Even so, these days I halt the lash in mid-air, am ready almost to extend a comradely hand instead. (p. 205)

Truth is still located in the imperialist discourse of European 'justice', with the decision to halt the lash or extend the hand very much one to be taken by the colonisers alone. Moreover, the continuing use of physical punishment emphasises the extent to which the lived experience of the Sudanese is shaped by social relations in which imperial conceptions of their space are dominant. As Lefebvre suggests, 'The dominant form of space, that of the centres of wealth and power, endeavours to mould the space it dominates (i.e. peripheral spaces), and it seeks, often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there'.⁵ The continuing

use of violence both suppresses alternative representations of space and highlights their resistant qualities.

Lefebvre's formulation emphasises that while social relations produce a space which is promoted as dominant, this is not to suggest that spaces such as Sudan are entirely determined by colonial relations. By contrast, the dominant conception of space which Charles understands can be challenged, and remains only one possible version of Sudan. Attributing mystical qualities to an area largely unexplored by Europeans is a commonplace in both colonialist and neo-colonialist times, and Charles's evocation of Sudan resembles Ondaatje's English patient's desert in this respect. Charles's diaries demonstrate a desire for the African landscape which parallels his desire for African men. Both are conceptualised as Other, in the terms described by Said as the 'contrasting image, idea, personality, experience' which in turn defines the West's own self-image.⁶ This Otherness is, of course, attributed by the colonisers in a process described by Tiffin and Lawson:

A particular form of the obscuring function of language and textuality is the process of erasure by which the obscurity is transferred from the language to the field being inscribed. Colonialism, like other dominant discourses, alternately fetishized and feared its Others – both race and place – depending on its sense of the threat posed by the Other.⁷

Sudan is contrasted with England as a land of 'open spaces almost without end, in which the rare, unobvious & beautiful people materialise out of the quivering heat' (p. 210). The African country is associated with a comfortable nudity, tactile male friendships and the chance for Charles to escape from the constraints of a European style office job. However, Charles's depiction of the Nuba Hills does not include any reference to the way in which the native inhabitants describe the land. Rather, the

mystery and freedom with which he characterises the Hills reflects his conception of English identity, and its drawbacks, more than the site itself.

However, Charles's dominant colonial map of his environment cannot fully contain his experiences of African spaces. At first, Charles celebrates his Sudanese house, projecting his own disassociation from the detail of everyday European life:

It is a house reduced to its very elements, with empty holes for windows and doors, so that one looks from one room into the next - & through that to the outside, the surrounding shacks, the clustered peaks of the huts or the bald, enigmatic rocks. The house is a kind of frame for living in or discipline for thought – so that its few furnishings, the book-case, a rather hideous rug, the photograph of the king, seem unnecessary embarrassments. (pp. 206-7)

Again, Africa is portrayed as primitive and mysterious, and defined through contrast with England. Later, after Taha has been bitten by a scorpion, Charles is no longer as comfortable in his new colonial identity:

for once the beautiful simplicity of the house revealed itself as a menacing bareness, a kind of trap in which to escape from one room was only to be imprisoned in the next. I felt my responsibility weigh on me, at the same time as it buoyed me up – an asphyxiating feeling. More strictly it was like a cramp when swimming – a sudden challenge in a friendly element, threatening where before it had only sustained. (pp. 209-10)

Charles's map of this space has ignored vital aspects, and the possibility that the character of place can change through different events and perspectives. Moreover, his narrative of the space is challenged, as the house no longer reflects his feelings of security, but becomes an unknown and threatening process of transition between one area and the next. He is unable to relinquish his 'responsibility', but is forced to acknowledge that his control of his environment is not complete. Regardless of the extent of imperial power, its control over the land is only ever partial.

Charles's memoirs demonstrate that imperial European powers mapped not only the land, but also their own cultural centrality. White imperial identities could be established against the subjugated natives, a process of definition both controlled by and privileging the Europeans. Sudan is represented through Orientalist discourse, described by Edward Said as 'the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period'.⁸ Following Said, Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson summarise the effect of colonial representation on the subjectivity of local inhabitants: 'imperial relations may have been established initially by guns, guile and disease, but they were maintained in their interpellative phase largely by textuality'.⁹ Charles's career takes place in the latter stages of the Empire, at a time when British military superiority is no longer in the foreground of the imperial project. Rather, such force is a threat used to maintain the more visible legal controls exerted on the Sudanese. That Charles's position depends on the enforcement of this legal system, defined by the British in accordance with their own cultural norms, emphasises the role of discourse in controlling the relations of individuals' physical space. Charles's diaries offer personalised maps of both the alien land and people he finds himself among. He is sympathetic to the Nuba people, yet his methods of representation retain elements central to the imperial project.

Nonetheless, Hollinghurst's novel challenges the dominant representation of colonial space in Sudan through Charles's narrative. Tiffin and Lawson emphasise that colonialism 'is an operation of discourse, and as an operation of discourse it interpellates local subjects by incorporating them in a system of representation. They

are always already written by that system of representation'.¹⁰ Resistance can be maintained by the possibility of alternative discourses, as the work of writers such as Rushdie and Ondaatje suggests. Hollinghurst's text does not include the voice of the Africans that Charles encounters, yet this does not suggest that they have no means of representing the world, but simply that the novel concentrates on Charles's imperial English identity in relation to this space. Resistance to this dominant discourse can also be found in the ways in which Charles's imperial maps of self are consistently challenged by an environment which is never really within his control. White imperial maps struggle to control terrain and are challenged by the failure of Charles's attempts to map Africa and Africans, and his attempts to establish an anti-racist English identity in a colonial space.

Much of the challenge felt by Charles in relation to his colonial identity occurs as he realises that he, too, is subject to a process of representation over which he has no control. He describes the situation of the administrator as one in which 'one disappeared,' from European society into the exotic spaces of the colonies, yet 'one also remained in view' (p. 240). Charles's diaries also reveal the ambivalence of this self-appointed colonial identity through this idea of 'remaining in view'. Although we do not read any representations of the English authored by the Sudanese, Charles's emphasis on remaining in view confirms that white Europeans, too, can be evaluated and redescribed. He recognises that difference is experienced by those he considers Other, as he recalls an early encounter with a black American soldier while still at school. The response of Charles and his schoolfriends to a swearword uttered by the soldier first demonstrates that the schoolboys' language is itself not neutral, but has political implications. He writes, 'It was a word we sometimes used, but to

hear it used against us by someone from the class where rough language (& “fucking” itself) were known to thrive, was a shocking and belittling experience’ (p. 115). “Fucking” certainly seems thriving enough among Charles’s friends at boarding school, yet the soldier’s race and class make similar references shocking. The identity of the English public schoolboy will not allow the same actions to be described in the same way, presuming to control the representation of both classes. However, as Charles’s shock suggests, he begins to recognise that his is not the only possible worldview. Describing the soldier, he writes, ‘Everything about him was strange, forceful; he was utterly his normal self, yet to me he was abrasively, rankly new’ (p. 115). An utterly normal self is suddenly perceived to exist outwith Charles’s own established understanding of his world, which in turn establishes an alternative means of representing that world.

Charles’s realisation that there are alternative ways of mapping the world surfaces again in colonial space. Sudan therefore changes from an environment in which European men can explore new social contact within the privileges of colonial power relations, to one which raises questions regarding the apparent neutrality of the colonial production of space. Charles is uneasy on realising that he can also be the object of knowledge. He is horrified when approached by a Port Said man who quickly guesses his homosexuality: ‘I was keenly dismayed, humiliated, feeling like he had read me like a book’ (p. 183). Thus the European can also be controlled as text, and through representation in discourse. He begins to appreciate that the Sudanese will also view him as an Other: ‘I saw how singular I must be for Hassan, & for the new houseboy, Taha’ (p. 206). Gradually, England can also appear as a constructed space no more stable and controlled than Africa: ‘There are the long

monthly letters from home, but like *The Times* which comes, folded, yellowed and elderly, six weeks late, they seem like reports from a fictional world, improbably stuffed with circumstance' (p. 206). In accepting that British spaces are also dependent on designated aspects of importance and influence, Charles's narrative explicitly problematises the colonial power relations which allow him to construct Europe as central and African spaces as peripheral.

In keeping with the postcolonial narratives of other writers, such as Rushdie and Ondaatje, resistant maps of colonised spaces are not simply introduced to replace the dominant conception of spatial relations in *The Swimming-Pool Library*. Hollinghurst challenges colonial conceptions of space by undermining Charles's apparently secure relationship with a controlled environment. In addition, however, Charles's narrative demonstrates a more knowing investigation of the dominant social relations in his society. Despite his racial and class privilege, as a homosexual man Charles also belongs to a social group whose position is more ambivalent. Colonial spaces provide spaces in which his desires, considered deviant by many at home, can be explored. Whether this allegedly subversive use of colonial spaces supports or challenges their dominant production is now investigated.

Charles's narrative suggests that his sexuality is no barrier to his role in the colonies:

they were completely untroubled – even to the extent of having a slight preference for it, in my opinion. Quite unlike all this modern nonsense about how we're security risks and what-have-you. They had the wit to see that we were prone to immense idealism and dedication. (p. 241)

Joseph Bristow sees a similar image in much literature of the late nineteenth century, writing, 'countless other examples could be rallied to show how a specific ideal of

the Englishman was being pressed into the service of empire: a man who was dutiful, self-sacrificing, and willing to go to the ends of the earth in a spirit of patriotic zeal'.¹¹ The relevance of this image to figures such as Charles highlights the complex nature of relations between sexuality and empire in the formation of identities. Bristow stresses that this empire-builder is associated with physical and moral strength and is contrasted with the effeminate figure of the scholar.¹² Bristow also argues that *The Swimming-Pool Library* demonstrates the deconstruction of the distinction between the virile object of desire (often black or working class) and the effeminate, upper-class individual in the late twentieth century. The main narrator of the novel, Will, is highly educated and well-read, feeling absolutely at home in the 'effeminate' world of high culture, yet is a keen member of his sports club, demonstrating the physical prowess of the 'virile' type. Even the title of the novel reflects this dual role. Charles, meanwhile, is clearly more a scholar than an example of strength, although he is young, active and healthy during his time in colonial service. His identity both supports and escapes this colonial ideal, with more difficulties arising from his desire to establish interracial relationships than from his homosexuality. Charles even states of his sexuality, 'of course in a Muslim country it was a positive advantage...' (p. 241). Whether Charles's supposition is accurate is not revealed, yet it appears that the colonial environment provides a safer space for gay desire than England itself.

Interracial relationships in *The Swimming-Pool Library* are, like all the sexual relationships depicted, alluded to or fantasised about in the novel, between men. Robert Young considers the status of homosexuality in an imperial context in *Colonial Desire*. Young posits that theories of race propounded in the nineteenth

century were also theories of desire, focusing on sexual union and procreation between blacks and whites. He argues that 'same-sex sex, though clearly locked into an identical same-but-different dialectic of racialized sexuality, posed no threat because it produced no children; its advantage was that it remained silent, covert and unmarked'. Young continues, 'In fact, in historical terms, concern about racial amalgamation tended if anything to encourage same-sex sex (playing the imperial game was, after all, already an implicitly homo-erotic practice)'.¹³ His assumption of an 'implicitly homo-erotic practice' is based on the extent to which non-white races are feminized by colonial discourse, thus allowing the colonising male to treat the colonised man in terms of heterosexual discourse towards women. However, Young also makes the point that homosexuality was often aligned with miscegenation, and therefore disapproved of. Young highlights the variable relationship between homosexuality and empire that is played out in the spaces of the colonies.

Charles associates his experience of empire with sexual freedom, as his description of homosexuality as a 'positive advantage' demonstrates (p. 241). Again this follows a conventional pattern for writing on the Arabic nations, which Said suggests almost inevitably posits the Orient as 'a place where one could look for sexual experience unobtainable in Europe'.¹⁴ While Said mentions homosexual writers, such as Gide and Maugham, he does not analyse the link between homosexuality and Orientalism, a point noted by Joseph Boone, who discusses the representation of sexual contact between males in texts from colonised Arabic states in 'Vacation Cruises; or, The Homoerotics of Orientalism'. Arguing that Said's seminal text, *Orientalism*, ignores the homoerotic elements of textual representations of the Orient, he writes, 'the fact remains that the possibility of sexual contact with

and between men underwrites and at times even explains the historical appeal of orientalism as an occidental mode of male perception, appropriation, and control'. His analysis of non-fictional texts claims that they 'are implicated in a colonizing enterprise that often "others" the homosexually inscribed Arab male, a condition that obtains, albeit with differing valences and contexts, whether that "other" is perceived with dread or with desire'.¹⁵ I suggest that Charles's fictional diaries participate in a similar 'othering' of Taha and his compatriots. Despite his professed admiration for his servant, his denial of Taha's individual agency is concurrent with the Orientalist project identified by Said and Boone.

Charles's desire for Taha both idolises the young man and denies him any personal agency, and therefore continues to be enacted within spaces regulated by colonial discourse. Charles watches him squatting in 'perfect, illiterate silence' (p. 207). Taha's inability to record his own representation in a manner intelligible to the Englishman is rendered as silence, a blank map on which Charles is free to posit his own perceptions. He continues, 'his eyes, which are always upon me, are weightless, demand nothing, are themselves dark globes in which lamp & stars are distantly reflected!' (p. 207). Charles's picture of Taha provides an image in which all that is reflected is Charles and his own concept of self and other.¹⁶ On Charles's return to England, Taha is displaced from his native environment and relocated to London, reversing Charles's own journey but arriving, needless to say, not as a governor but as a servant. Co-existent with Charles's declared 'absolute adoration of black people' is his inability to conceive of their relationship outwith the bounds of master and servant, roles which are preserved in their new home (p. 242). Charles's Orientalist spatialising of their relationship is revealed by his response to Taha's wedding, on

which he reports, 'I gave *him away* into that little house in North Kensington and into a world more unknown and inaccessible than the Nuba Hills where I had found him first' (p. 257). Spaces of heterosexual relationships, such as the marital home, are ones in which Charles cannot adopt a position compatible with dominant forces in power relations, in contrast to the colonial space of the Nuba Hills which his role in social relations makes 'accessible' to him.

In his analysis of colonialism and homosexual desire in literature, Christopher Lane proposes that homosexual drives are 'resistant and generally unassimilable,' within the imperial project. Accordingly, he suggests, 'sexual desire between men frequently ruptured Britain's imperial allegory by shattering national unity and impeding the entire defeat of subject groups'.¹⁷ Nonetheless, Lane's useful analysis cannot disguise the extent to which the role of men such as Charles, both homosexual and empire-builder, remains ambivalent in the construction of both dominant and resistant spaces. Richard Dellamora points to the ambiguity of Charles's position of both identifying with and challenging dominant power relations in his analysis of the novel. He writes that as 'both a gentleman and a homosexual, he is unaware how oppositional his sexual preferences are. In Nantwich, Hollinghurst represents simultaneous identification and disidentification with gentlemanly values'.¹⁸ Although Dellamora does not make this explicit, these values are those of imperialism.

Colonial spaces resemble gay spaces in the European context, in that they both facilitate and restrict homosexual desire. Conversely, these relationships both reassert and challenge established patterns of racial hegemony. Charles's homosexuality is permitted and yet contained within his imperial role, as his horrified reaction to the

Port Said salesman's accurate guess demonstrates. His desire for Taha is tolerated in Africa, largely because of its invisibility but is less appropriate in the public world of England, becoming a threat to dominant ideals of masculinity and race relations. Nonetheless, Charles's own anti-racist commitment is compromised by the master-servant relationship that is retained, serving to reinforce the racist ideals he apparently rejects. While his apparently anti-racist views challenge the creation of a violently maintained colonial space, Charles continues to inhabit and reinforce the spaces of British colonial power, reproducing these relations within his English home.

However, despite this apparent identification with the dominant ideas of colonialism, there is clearly more than one variable at work here. Jonathon Dollimore associates the freedom of homosexual expression with an oppositional stance: 'For homosexuals more than most, the search for sexual freedom in the realm of the foreign has been inseparable from a repudiation of the "Western" culture responsible for their repression and oppression'. However, Dollimore also identifies the problematic relationship between issues such as race and sexuality in such cases. Discussing André Gide's attempts to bring an Arab boy to Paris, he writes:

Discrimination works through the asymmetry of subject positioning, and the plurality of hierarchies, as well as the brute fact of inequality institutionalized in hierarchy itself. This is partly what it means to speak of the interconnections of race, class, and gender. It suggests too why establishing personal culpability is not the issue.¹⁹

Thus, while aspects of Charles's reported behaviour can be criticised, it is perhaps more relevant to highlight the difficulties of establishing an unambiguous point of resistance to the dominant representations of society in space. The 'plurality of

hierarchies' ensures that a homosexual coloniser, such as Charles, is both a collaborator and a deviant in relation to the colonial project. The novel documents the intersection of race and sexuality as two ways in which positions are assigned or adopted in relations of power.

Charles's diaries document the extent to which colonial spaces continue to escape dominant imperialist representations. However, while they demonstrate the complexity of the social relations which produce such spaces, they do not, finally offer viable maps of resistance on the grounds of either race or sexuality. Yet, while Hollinghurst's novel does not offer alternative representations of colonial spaces, the inclusion of Charles's narrative highlights the continuing influence of postcolonial power relations on late twentieth-century Britain.

Dominant Representations of Multicultural Spaces

Charles's diary features throughout *The Swimming-Pool Library* and is interspersed with the 1980s narrative, serving as a reminder that the issues of race and nationhood he raises are very much contemporary matters of debate. As Lane suggests, this diary 'presents a lineage of gay affairs throughout the twentieth century; it also interrupts every contemporary relationship by foregrounding the resilience of interracial turbulence and ambivalence'.²⁰ Thus Charles's colonial attitudes have relevance both to the interracial relationships participated in by younger characters, and to the continuing use of colonial practices to define the nature of Britishness and establish spaces of interaction in a contemporary multicultural society. Moreover, Hollinghurst's next novel, *The Folding Star* also investigates European spaces of multicultural interaction. Both are examined in order to establish that social relations

continue to produce social spaces, and to investigate the potential for alternative mappings within the novels.

The Swimming-Pool Library depicts sexual encounters which are enacted in spaces that cross the boundaries of race and class which otherwise separate the participants. Will, the narrator, makes explicit the link between his older friend Charles's colonial desire and his own preference for young black men. Enacted in the spaces of his upper-class, 1980s London home, Will's relationships with these men are predicated on difference, which he understands not only in terms of physical appearance but in terms of class and education. Hollinghurst makes this position clear in the opening section of the novel, in which Will has left a young black man, Arthur, that he picked up the previous evening, in his flat. Will emphasises that he has left a 'virtual stranger' in his home on account of a family 'habit of testing servants and window cleaners by exposing them to temptation' (p. 2). Will's perception of their relationship therefore foreshadows the master-servant dynamic which Charles will later recall having with Taha.

The spaces of privilege and control in which Will's desires are enacted are therefore produced largely by a dominant conception of social relations. These occur on the basis suggested by Ross Chambers, who argues:

although the patterns of Will's scandalous desire infringe the taboos of a class-conscious and racist power structure (the 'boys' he falls in love with are exclusively working-class and for preference Black), they also simultaneously reproduce that structure, signifying his class determined positioning within a system of power that only his desire infringes.²¹

Will's relationships reproduce dominant power structures and it is by no means certain that even his desires infringe this positioning. Arthur is admired for what Will

terms his 'illiterate, curling readiness' (p. 144). Arthur clearly is not illiterate, asking Will to buy him some reading material, but this image suits Will's own assessment of a relationship which he is therefore empowered to define: 'Loving him was all interpretation, creative in its way' (p. 64). However, relationships such as these which push at the boundaries of conventional social interaction also begin to create new spaces which problematise the dominant conception of contemporary multicultural spaces.

The master-servant dynamic of Will's relationship with Arthur is challenged as it is enacted in a manner which produces new spaces within the apparently environment of Will's flat. He is fiercely possessive of his space, inviting no friends or family into his 'ever-intensifying privacy', resenting in particular any expression of interest from the grandfather who purchased it on his behalf (p. 98). Initially he leaves Arthur in the flat as one might leave a pet, comforting in the home, but inappropriate in the world outside. However, a somewhat confused story of attempted murder causes Arthur to retreat into hiding. It becomes impossible for him to leave the flat, the character of which begins to change. Arthur uses heating to make the flat excessively hot, while his fugitive status necessitates keeping the curtains drawn at all times. This claustrophobic and airless state reflects their increasingly strained relationship, but also emphasises Will's flat as a site of social conflict. Protected by financial and racial privilege, Will is generally able to ignore representations of space which contrast with his own, yet conflicting social factors suddenly invade his personal space.

Situations such as these challenge the assumption of spatial control that arises from Will's dominant position in power relations. The novel both highlights and

confronts Will's dominant position, despite Joseph Bristow's suggestion that the narrative is not critical of Charles and Will's exploitative desire. Bristow writes:

a longstanding pattern of interracial sexual desire between men is being carefully reworked throughout Hollinghurst's novel. Yet at no point does the narration defy the stereotypes attached to these erotic encounters between white and black males. The black men and working-class men of this pre-AIDS world are potently sexual, readily available for the upper-class man's sexual requirements.

Bristow sees no criticism of these desires, nor any need to criticise, celebrating the fact that, 'nothing about this novel is politically pure'.²² However, it becomes apparent that these stereotypes *are* challenged, and that this challenge constitutes an attack on an understanding of relations based on black acquiescence to white desire. Charles's diaries never confirm that sexual relations between himself and Taha, or any of the other Africans he encounters in Sudan, took place, or what the circumstances might have been if they had. Will defines himself through sexual success and is as 'readily available' as any of the black men featured. Ultimately, his is a first person narrative, self-consciously reflecting only his point of view, and the stereotypes he creates. We read his opinion of Arthur, in the terms highlighted by Bristow, yet Arthur's actions are clearly unpredictable and inexplicable to Will as his sudden disappearance demonstrates. It is notable that a later interracial encounter, occurring at a point where Will's control of relationships and environment is clearly receding, is between Will and Abdul, Taha's now-adult son. For the first time we read of Will taking a passive role in sex, after which he is unceremoniously dismissed: "“Hmm,” he said noncommittally; then “Fuck off out of here, man”" (p. 262). That this incident occurs in the kitchen of the gentleman's dining club in which

Abdul works further emphasises the ambiguous power relations that continue to exist and be enacted in the spaces of the novel.

A similar process is undergone in *The Folding Star*, in which the white, English, upper-middle-class narrator, Edward Manners, has a relationship with a Moroccan-French immigrant, Cherif. Both are foreigners in the small Belgian town where they meet, yet as a migrant worker, Cherif is immediately located as alien in the world of European high culture. The couple meet in the town's art gallery, and Cherif makes it clear that he attends the gallery in order to cruise for men, rather than out of a love of painting.²³ Edward finds Cherif's appearance incongruous in the context of his clothing and location: 'My friend pushed back the staid tweed cap which gave his brown features and dull black curls a touching air of displacement and grinned at me in a manner unclouded by questions of art history' (p. 9). Nonetheless, Edward's positive response suggests that he, too, can be distracted from the world of high culture. However, Cherif remains disassociated from the world of learning which Edward can choose to re-enter at any time. Much later in their relationship, Edward can use this barrier to escape from his lover by attending the art museum where he works. Although there are no physical barriers to Cherif's involvement in the museum, cultural blockages lead to the same result: 'Cherif never asked me about that inaccessible realm' (p. 305).

Edward can belong in this northern European town in a way that the French-Moroccan cannot, displaced as he is in the trappings of its culture. Concerned with the disappearance of one of his pupils, Edward notes that the boy's mother interprets Cherif's outward appearance negatively, glancing at him, 'as if he were himself a manifestation, a messenger, of the underworld (long ignored, long suspected and

feared) that was waiting to receive her son' (p. 347). In fact it is the Englishman who has just spent the night with her teenage son, yet Cherif's economic and ethnic background may single him out to her as a possible villain. Nonetheless, it is this position of inequality that appeals to Edward sexually, and he is resentful of behaviour which does not conform to this economic and ethnic stereotype. Accordingly he envisages himself as a kind of colonial benefactor, preferring to feel exploited financially than in a domestic partnership: 'It was the old evasive Cherif for a second or two, sexily unreliable, the one I had dumbly exchanged for the plaintive lover, the dopy stay-at-home...' (p. 307). As in the earlier novel, the stereotypical associations of race and class feature heavily in the experience of the white, wealthy narrator's desire.

Their relationship, like Will's with Arthur in *The Swimming-Pool Library*, appears most obviously in crisis within Edward's home, which becomes a space in which conflicting representations of the world collide. His own racial stereotyping backfires when he finds Cherif smoking a joint:

'This is all very North African, dear,' I said; 'but I don't actually approve of smoking in the bedroom.' I was banging about, clearing the place up, powered by a few dull resentments. 'Lovely in a brothel in Tangier, I'm sure, but here...' (p. 282)

Later he admits that 'the past two weeks had turned me into a humourless char' (p. 33). Domestic space becomes the ground on which Edward asserts his economic superiority, eventually dispatching Cherif back to his workers' hostel. However, in so doing, he also attaches himself to a class-based 'English' identity based on property and an anachronistic sense of propriety. This is also illustrated by their

arrival at Edward's hotel, which has already been identified as gay-friendly, on their first night together:

Even at the Mykonos, I thought, Cherif, in his brown leather jerkin and working man's boots, might appear too rough and set on mischief to be admitted. But that was only British class pudeur – the receptionist nodded to him equably as the key was handed over. (p. 10)

He moves on to speculate that Cherif may have 'brought his custom here before', both reinforcing his stereotyping of the non-white man as sexually ready and implicitly challenging his assumptions through accepting his own conditioned behaviour (p. 10). Unlike Will in the earlier novel, Edward appears to be 'in' on the jokes of Hollinghurst's narrative, and demonstrates a far greater awareness of his own, often prejudiced, conception of the novel's spaces.

Resistance is achieved by Cherif as he challenges the role that Edward has mapped out for him. Cherif fails to appear at their second rendezvous, sending Edward to a bar where gay men of any race are distinctly unwelcome. His final reassertion of agency occurs when he abruptly leaves a car while Edward is driving it. His departure is as unexpected as it is decisive, forcing Edward to stop when he has no intention of doing so. Cherif also leaves behind the expensive coat that Edward, temporarily enjoying the role of patron, has bought for him, denying the exploitative image that the narrator has attached to him. Cherif finally escapes Edward's representation, but his characterisation throughout the novel highlights the continuing racism apparent in multicultural environments.

In his reading of *The Swimming-Pool Library*, Lane argues convincingly that the stereotypes applied to the white men's black lovers can be read as an attack on British society, asserting, 'at the heart of Hollinghurst's novel is a profound crisis

about Britain's present and future identity, which hinges urgently and violently on the objects and ideas with which its citizens identify'. He continues by affirming that stereotypes are present in the narrative but stressing that by invoking these stereotypes, Charles and Will 'also capture the despair of Britain's national stagnation'.²⁴ As such they represent the need for continual remapping of contemporary British identity. The present situation is not promising:

By representing his characters' fantasies as part of a vast confluence of racial and national difficulty, Hollinghurst demonstrates that Britain has become mired in a renewed vision of colonial splendor and global influence, a paralyzing conviction that Salman Rushdie has usefully derided as 'the phantom twitchings of an amputated limb.'²⁵

Lane's argument demonstrates the extent to which *The Swimming-Pool Library* challenges the dominant conception of neo-colonialist space he portrays in Britain.

The maps of English identity projected by both Charles and Will highlight their own inadequacies, or the displacement of this identity from a colonial ideal which has long since passed away and indeed, as Charles's memoirs demonstrate, never really existed in the first place. Nonetheless, the novel continues to problematise the creation of a conception of space which is straightforwardly oppositional to this dominant. Both men are strongly opposed to the overt and violent racism that leads to Taha's death, and to the constant harassment suffered by Arthur and his family. Charles links this racism to his own concept of nationhood, 'There are times when I can't think of my country without a kind of despairing shame' (p. 244). Recalling an incident in which a young racist thug sports a Union Jack on his jacket he states, 'I wondered to myself what on earth that flag could mean now' (p. 245). At such points the nature of Englishness becomes as clouded and mysterious as that projected on to

colonial Africa. Hollinghurst's novel depicts both the production of colonial spaces according to the social relations of imperialism and the challenges to the dominant conception of such spaces that continue to exist. However, as both the complexity of Charles's actions and those of Will and Edward in multicultural Europe's postcolonial period demonstrate, mapping resistant accounts of colonial spaces proves a complicated and ambiguous procedure. Such ambiguity is also found in Hollinghurst's representations of city spaces.

Mapping the City

Hollinghurst's novels are set in European cities at the close of the twentieth century, with *The Swimming-Pool Library* taking place in London, and *The Folding Star* in a small, unnamed city in Flemish-speaking Belgium. Each of these city spaces is shown by the novels to be produced according to a complex network of social relations. The earlier novel, in particular, demonstrates a dominant conception of city spaces which are presented as neutral in Will's narrative, yet which are subsequently challenged.

Theorists such as Jameson, Soja and Harvey have each posited a postmodern age which is characterised by city spaces in which people are bombarded by communications based on a newly globalised economy. This is Harvey's 'time-space compression,' or Jameson's postmodern hyperspace, involving 'our insertion as individual subjects into a multidimensional set of radically discontinuous realities'.²⁶ Hollinghurst's novels depict individuals in an increasingly globalised environment, in which they have a great deal of contact with the people and cultures of other nations. However, as my analysis has shown, such postmodern experiences vary

enormously depending on the situation of individuals. Doreen Massey reflects on the arguments regarding 'time-space compression' and notes, 'different social groups, and different individuals, are placed in very distinct ways in relation to these flows and interconnections'. She argues that degrees of mobility between spaces are determined by factors such as class, race and gender:

Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility: some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it.²⁷

Hollinghurst's narrators appear, overall, to belong to social groups 'more in charge of' mobility as they travel unhindered through the postmodern spaces of cities in late twentieth century Europe. The first-person narrative of *The Swimming-Pool Library* offers a cognitive map of London which reflects a conception of space promoted by many dominant forces in social relations.

Will's mobility through London is largely based on his secure economic background. The opening pages of *The Swimming-Pool Library* distinguish Will from the majority of Londoners through his class status. He notes the maintenance workers who must stay in the Underground system overnight, trapped both spatially and temporally by their need to earn wages, while he can move freely, 'scuttl[ing] out as if being granted an unusual concession' (p. 1). His freedom is, of course, an 'unusual concession', as he accepts when revealing the reason for his lack of employment: 'I was beckoned on by having too much money, I belonged to that tiny proportion of the populace that indeed owns almost everything' (p. 3). This characterises Will's highly specific relation to space: his class status frees him from the restraints imposed on most individuals in a capitalist society who must attend a

place of employment most days. Extensive control over his personal space and his access to social environments are also made possible.

Domestic space is one way in which control is established. Will lives in a flat bought for him by his wealthy grandfather, and this space is a central point in the control he exerts over his environment. It affords him a setting in which he can both express his desires and retreat from unwelcome contact. Living alone, he is able to disengage himself from other people and their demands. This contrasts with Arthur's home in an underprivileged suburb, in which he is subject to the influence of both his family and the noise created by neighbours that Will imagines leaves one 'dispossessed' in one's own home (p. 170). Will's flat is situated in a desirable area of London, freeing him from the threat of racial and homophobic abuse that surrounds Arthur's home.

Once again, however, the narrative challenges the dominant representation of space which privileges men such as Will. Protected spaces can become insecure, just as Charles's home in Africa becomes threatening and alien. Indeed, even Will notes the way in which those who have the most control are removed from the world that surrounds them as he views the old, aristocratic men in Charles's exclusive dining club:

They were anonymous, a type – and it was impossible to see how they could cope outside in the noise and race of the streets. How much did they know of the derisive life of the city which they ruled and from which they preserved themselves so immaculately and Edwardianly intact? (p. 42)

Charles's London home features a series of unsuitable, ex-convict butlers, and even its location demonstrates just how anachronistic his decaying lifestyle is: 'Charles

Nantwich's house was in a street off Huggin Hill, so narrow that it had been closed to traffic and was no longer marked in the London A-Z' (p. 70). This type of positioning is gradually being removed from society's maps, as the world outside intrudes on even the most secluded environments. Despite Charles's elevated class positioning, his diary recalls being imprisoned for his homosexuality during the 1950s, at which point he becomes subject to the same penalties as the poor. He refers to this period as akin to being flung, chained, into water, being suddenly relocated in a different and alien element. He rails against being 'violently removed from my rightful lettered habitat' (p. 249). Although he sympathises with his fellow inmates who are not upper class, the change in his social positioning is a part of his terrible experience. The repercussions of these events for Will's own assumption of class security are only discovered towards the end of his narrative when his grandfather's role in bringing about Charles's imprisonment is revealed. Will is, thus, wholly dependent on centrally homophobic power for his economic and class status, with even the personal space of his flat compromised on this basis.

Will's secure map of his environment, bolstered by his economic, racial and gender positioning, together with his youth and sexual success, comes under increasing challenge as the novel progresses. His financial independence gives him time to socialise in a local sports club, known as The Corry, where he can both work on his body and meet available men. Will asserts autonomy through his knowledge of these spaces, and the codes of behaviour that are appropriate to them. Versions of these codes are established in the public school Will attends as a child, wherein such spatial conventions are normalised by the dominant social positions of those who promote them. Thus the swimming pool of the novel's title, the site of Will's first

sexual experiences at boarding school, links this space directly to the experience of his adult life. This leads to a security of belonging, which he contrasts with other characters. Visiting the hotel where a young lover works he claims, 'Phil, able at last to show me a place where he belonged, responded by showing how accustomed he was to this person I did not even know' (p. 104). Despite Phil's regular attendance at the Corry, this, being Will's chosen domain, presumably does not qualify as an environment in which he belongs. Yet Will's easy notion of belonging is finally challenged by his inability to map all aspects of his surroundings. Finally realising that the hotel is Phil's 'terrain' as much as Will's flat is his, he discovers that others, too, can behave with autonomy, finding the supposedly innocent and faithful Phil in bed with another man.

Will is eventually forced to realise that it is not only old men such as Charles who are ignorant of the world beyond their own conception. His personal map of the city is repeatedly shown to be partial, due to his inability to conceptualise a world outwith his own class-based perception. Visiting an unfamiliar part of London he reports:

When I got out at Mile End, though, other passengers got on, residents of an unknown area who used the Underground, just as I did, as a local service, commuting and shopping within the suburbs and rarely if ever going to the West End, which I visited daily. I felt more competent for my mobility, but also vaguely abashed as I came out into the unimpressable streets of this strange neighbourhood. (pp. 130-1)

His mixed feelings of competence and abashment reflect both his assumption of privilege and his own uncomfortable centralisation of the wealthy areas he frequents. Despite their lesser political influence, the inhabitants of this area have a further centre of their own. Will finds it difficult to acknowledge that his own map of the

city is incomplete, and may also be marginalised. He describes the impact of his home environment on Arthur, 'Holland Park and my place is all a completely new world to him. He lives with his family in a tower block', but is unprepared for the violent realisation that Arthur's home territory is equally unfamiliar to himself (p. 20).

Travelling to Arthur's home in the East End of London, Will is first unable to comprehend the signs of middle or working class environments, seeing only 'desertion' in warehouses and suburban housing (p. 168). Even when he is surrounded by people, he compares the area to a textbook representation, removed from the day to day reality of ordinary people's lives: 'It was like an anonymous, exemplary street, with a range of nameable activities, drawn to teach vocabulary in a foreign language' (p. 168). He continues by contrasting this area with his, and the dominant groups in society's, established systems of mapping:

I was amazed to think it was in the city where I lived, and consulted my A-Z surreptitiously so as not to set off with faked familiarity in the wrong direction. The culture shock was compounded as a single-decker bus approached showing the destination "Victoria and Albert Docks". Victoria and Albert *Docks*! To the people here the V and A was not, as it was in the slippered west, a vast terracotta-encrusted edifice, whose echoing interiors held ancient tapestries, miniatures of people copulating, dusty baroque sculpture and sequences of dead and spotlit rooms taken wholesale from the houses of the past. (pp. 168-9)

The sterile quality of the West End museums momentarily threatens Will's assumptions through their contrast with the bustle of the East End, yet the east's different characteristics are quickly assimilated through Will's titillated fantasy of dockers and their tattoos. He assumes art is for the economically privileged alone,

noting the 'surreal bookishness' of the tower blocks, named after locations in the novels of Hardy (p. 170).

Will defines himself through his education, contrasting his articulate, aesthetically-aware self with those less privileged, yet as the narrative's mocking humour suggests, his dominant understanding of London's spaces can be challenged. His relationship with Arthur assumes that the younger man's relative inarticulacy reveals a worldview which, unlike his own, can be challenged:

I felt I pressed him to the edge of his articulacy, and at the same time as I sought to protect him appeared to him dangerously inquisitive, threatening to topple the beliefs and superstitions which were the private structure of his life, and which had never before been exposed. (p. 32)

The irony that Will's own belief and superstitions, the private structure, or maps, of his life are similarly 'toppled' is revealed with Charles's revelations about Will's own family background.

The failure of Will's control of representative strategies is depicted in a violent encounter with a group of racist, homophobic thugs. Arriving at Arthur's tower block home, Will is unable to respond to the environment around him, denying alternative discourse to his own. He appropriates the language of some local children: 'I somehow expected them to shout obscenities, and was glad I had come ordinarily dressed, in a sports shirt, an old linen jacket, jeans and daps' (p. 169). Initially, seeing the group of skinheads, he can appraise 'a fat ass and a fat dick' and pronounce a Firbankian opinion, 'Trés gutter, ma'am' (p. 170).²⁸ However, approached by the skinheads in this aggressive and alien environment, his control of language fails:

“Look, excuse me,” I said tetchily, nervous, hearing my own voice in my ears as though they had played it to me on a tape-recorder. I felt I mustn’t flatten it, or pretend, but to them it must have sounded a parody voice, pickled in culture and money. (p. 172)

The terrifying beating that ensues illustrates the lack of control over space that even the most privileged can experience when mapping fails. Moreover, the complex network of power relations that this incident displays problematises any straightforward alternative to dominant systems of mapping space, as the very nature of dominance is shown to be changeable. Thus a space is produced in which social conflicts are enacted, with little means of resistance evident.

If *The Swimming-Pool Library* documents an abrupt shift from a position of security to one of dislocation, the narrator of *The Folding Star* demonstrates from the outset a greater awareness of his own fallibility and the partial nature of his knowledge of spaces. While Will is seemingly oblivious of the extent to which his own conceptions of spaces are constructed by social forces, Edward realises the existence of a network of social relations which determine his views. He mocks his own teenage snobbishness as he follows the object of his first crush to his unfamiliar home: ‘it must have been a self-imposed prohibition, a social fear that was activated again when I understood that Mark Lyle’s parents had now been reduced to a council flat’ (*The Folding Star*, p. 202). Although this mixture of snobbish self-assertion and self-conscious denigration is maintained in later relationships, notably with Cherif, Edward’s narrative does highlight an awareness of the construction of the spaces in which these relationships are enacted, according to the social relations of those involved.

Edward also demonstrates a far greater awareness of his own narrative as one means of representing space. Arriving in his new home in Belgium, he explores the city:

referring on and off to a tourist map which omitted side streets and alleys and showed the famous buildings in childish out-of-scale drawings. Its poetic effect was to give me the shape of the town as a fifteenth-century engineer, expert in dykes and piles, might have shown it in plan to a ruling count. (p. 11)

Edward's map highlights the relative importance afforded to older, historically interesting aspects of the small Flemish city in which he teaches. He is fully aware of this, noting that 'the industrial park, the post-war poor estates, the spent suburb of my first-night wanderings, were shown as fields, confirming the sense I had at every corner that the whole city aspired to be an artist's impression' (p. 11). His reaction to this map confirms that this view is only partial, only one possible representation which obscures many of the poorer and less touristically viable areas. However, this representation corresponds with Edward's own view of the city as an 'artist's impression', overlapping the lived reality of this space with the images produced in relation to it. Vincent Del Casino and Stephen Hanna's reflections on what they term 'tourism map spaces' highlight the ambiguities of Edward's own position in the city:

In one sense, therefore, we can think of tourism map spaces as disciplining tourists: defining particular actions as the tourist experience in opposition to a representation of the everyday. Yet, their imperfectly concealed absences, exclusions, margins and other ambiguities expose the multiple and changing identities present in any map space.²⁹

Edward is at once an outsider, directed towards the town's conventional tourist sites and, increasingly, a participant in the life of the city, made increasingly aware of 'absences, exclusions, margins and other ambiguities' of the mapped space.

These ambiguities are depicted throughout the narrative as spaces are shown to be variously defined. Edward is unable to explain his motives for leaving England to his family and friends, or to the string of Belgian men who express amazement at his decision. The attitudes of the Belgians emphasises the variety of perceptions that exist of a single place; talking to an aspiring model he realises:

I saw him wince to have the city of his dreams mocked. I knew to him it was size and grandeur and fashion-shoots and nights at Heaven; it wasn't crap and decay, the maze trodden by the wispy-bearded youngsters who slept in doorways when you glamorously left Heaven at two or three. (p. 312)

Visiting an old friend who is busy with marriage and fatherhood in the London satellite town where they both grew up, he realises the gap between their perceptions of the place: 'I couldn't explain to him why this was a place to get out of' (p. 239). Edward, unlike Will, is aware not only of the differing conceptions of familiar spaces that exist, but of the social factors which bring these conflicting representations into existence.

Hollinghurst's narrative highlights the significance of representation and, like Ondaatje, alludes to other forms of art within his writing. Edward works in a museum dedicated to the (fictional) artist, Edgard Orst, a native of the city, whose influence encroaches on Edward's life. Orst, who died in the early 1940s, produced paintings which reflect Edward's own impression of the spaces that surround him, as 'the mirror of a northern world, silent, wintry, interior, remote from the outdoor

brilliance of the south' (p. 379). Edward, in turn, worries about the historic city's 'deadness, its air of a locked museum, the recognition that what had happened had all been centuries ago' (p. 7). Images of sterility in landscape are used to parallel Edward's experience with that of the artist, as both remain in the area after the loss of a loved one. However, the connection established between narrator and artist also highlights their self-conscious questioning of their own abilities to represent the environment, just as Ondaatje's comparison of his narrative to photography does. Edward notes that the image of the doorway is repeated in Orst's work, while the artist himself refers to 'the little door each picture opens upon mystery, upon the unknown and the unknowable' (p. 66; p. 278). The significance of this spatial image lies in the narrative's acceptance of the inability of any representation to fully encapsulate the situation it depicts. Edward's friend Paul, the director of the Orst museum, concludes, 'he was just very myopic, as so many artists of all kinds are' (p. 280). Paul's comment can be extended to Edward's own narrative, which confirms, 'I knew nothing about this country, to me it was a dream-Belgium, it was Allemonde, a kingdom of ruins, and vanished pleasures, miracles and martyrdoms, corners where the light never shone' (p. 379). The 'certain aesthetic amazement,' with which he views his situation ensures that his perception of his Belgian experience can never be assumed as definitive (p. 379).

Edward finally realises that there is one site missing from his tourist map, and indeed from any of the available brochures on Orst: 'No tomb. How often I had failed to register the negative evidence, the white canvas, the invisible wingbeat that flutters the page' (p. 414). Orst, a Jew, was discovered in hiding during the Nazi occupation of Belgium and never seen again. As one of the absences described in Del

Casino and Hanna's portrayal of the tourism map space, the omission of his burial place illustrates the inevitable ambiguities contained within the map.³⁰ Edward's narrative, closely aligned with the world of Orst's art, conveys a similar awareness of its own partial and incomplete nature.

Hollinghurst's map of the city in *The Folding Star* is one which explicitly acknowledges its status as narrative. The following section argues that Hollinghurst's narratives also establish a basis for resistant maps, which challenge dominant conceptions of city spaces by highlighting the complexity of power relations in the interaction of spaces and sexuality in his work.

Homosocial Spaces/Homosexual Spaces

The spaces of Hollinghurst's novels are inhabited almost exclusively by men, particularly in the case of *The Swimming-Pool Library*, in which no women are featured as characters. In *The Folding Star*, too, women appear only incidentally. Spaces featured in the texts are those which Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick describes as 'homosocial', or used exclusively by one sex.³¹ Sedgwick stresses that the homosocial is not the same as the homosexual, but argues that there is no clear boundary between the two. This section explores the creation of homosocial and homosexual spaces as products of particular social relations.

Sedgwick's argument is that homosocial environments are not truly disassociated from homosexual feeling, despite being projected as such in many instances. She writes: 'To draw the "homosocial" back into the orbit of "desire", of the potentially erotic, then, is to hypothesize the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual – a continuum whose visibility, for

men, in our society, is radically disrupted'.³² This is not a matter of identifying 'latent' homosexual desire, but rather of challenging the dominant distinction of the sexual from the non-sexual. Sedgwick argues that while the drawing of this boundary is variable, it is not arbitrary:

the placement of the boundaries in a particular society affects not merely the definitions of these terms themselves – sexual/nonsexual, masculine/feminine – but also the apportionment of forms of power that are not obviously sexual. These include control over the means of production and reproduction of goods, persons, and meanings.³³

Sedgwick's contention is that a discourse of sexuality develops which in turn positions individuals in a network of power relations. It is the central argument of this thesis that such social relations produce spaces.

Hollinghurst's novels demonstrate that spaces are produced according to the social relations of sexuality which societies include. Various critics of *The Swimming-Pool Library* have discussed the exclusively homosocial nature of its setting. Britain in the 1920s and even in the 1980s is controlled primarily by men from the same background as Will and Charles. Alan Sinfield notes that the novel's focus 'does not involve fear and hatred of women, but it does tend to marginalise them'.³⁴ However, it can be argued that this exclusivity is a reflection of a significant feature of patriarchal power relations. Ross Chambers suggests that the absence of women has 'the result that there is a strong sense of continuity between the "Corry's" always ambiguously gay environment and the supposedly straight, but similarly equivocal, clothed "world of jackets and ties, cycle-clips and duffel coats" above ground'.³⁵ Will also believes that 'men don't really want women around much. I think most men are happiest in a male world, with gangs and best friends and all that'

(*The Swimming-Pool Library*, p. 242). Thus the boundary between the homosocial and the homosexual is called into question in the patriarchal societies that the novel depicts.

The significance for power relations of this continuity between two apparently segregated worlds arises from the privileged spaces in which male homosocial behaviour is enacted. We read nothing of either Will's or Charles's childhood memories, other than of their schooldays, both of which took place in the all-male environments of public school. In this environment, the boundaries between homosocial and homosexual are blurred as sex between boys is tolerated and even encouraged. Charles associates his memories of 'passionate couplings or orgiastic free-for-alls' with a kind of initiation into the male homosocial world:

Those who were not killed [in war] are running the country & the empire, examples of righteousness, & each of them knowing they have done these unspeakable things. I suppose it is part of the tacit lore of manhood, like going with whores or getting drunk, which are not incompatible with respectability and power. (p. 113)

The elevated role in power relations afforded to these aristocratic men is, however, part of a hierarchy which allows an older boy to rape Charles without fear of censure. Richard Dellamora identifies in Charles's memories of his schooldays an inability to separate his own homosexual desire from 'patterns of personal mastery and dependence' which will later influence his desire for Taha. Dellamora also suggests a similar process in more recent relations of power:

That Beckwith recognizes similar mores in his own schooling at Winchester and Oxford in the 1970s provides Hollinghurst with a way of suggesting that the patterns of power and desire in public school and at Oxbridge at the beginning of the century continue to this day despite legislative and cultural changes.³⁶

The dominant position occupied by the white male aristocrat ensures that notions of desire developed in the homosocial environment both shape and continue to be enacted in later, adult, relationships.

However, this position of control is volatile, as changes in social relations through time alter the spaces they produce. Both Charles and Will discover that their homosexual behaviour is not always approved, isolating them from some areas of male homosocial dominance. Control over the designation 'homosexual' is also implicated in power relations. Sedgwick argues that the power to name certain acts, spaces or persons as homosexual contains 'potential for giving whoever wields it a structuring definitional leverage over the whole range of male bonds that shape the social constitution'.³⁷ Sedgwick also suggests modern Western society not only delineates the homosexual from the homosocial, but also attributes a range of non-sexual attributes to those engaging in homosexual activity. Here she follows Michel Foucault in arguing that the figure of the homosexual is a creation of the nineteenth century. Foucault contends that the expansion of discourse on sex led to the new category of sexuality and the categorising of people according to sexual behaviour. He distinguishes the existence of homosexual behaviour in previous eras from the new category of a homosexual person:

As defined by the ancient civil or canonical codes, sodomy was a category of forbidden acts; their perpetrator was nothing more than the juridical subject of them. The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology.³⁸

Homosexual behaviour of course occurred in previous eras, yet its perceived role in the life of the individual has altered through time.

As Lefebvre suggests, 'each new form of state, each new form of political power, introduces its own particular way of partitioning space, its own particular administrative classification of discourses about space and about things and people in space'.³⁹ Particular developments in social relations have led to the designation not only of homosexual identities, but also of specifically homosexual spaces in which these identities are enacted. Following Foucault and others, John D'Emilio argues that the figure of the homosexual is an invention of the nineteenth century. He argues that earlier systems of production focused on the heterosexual family, with husband, wife and children all working to produce sufficient food and other products necessary for survival. Homosexual behaviour continued, but adopting a homosexual identity in this environment was impossible as there was 'no "social space"' that allowed men and women to be gay.⁴⁰ The advent of wage labour precludes this need for self-sufficiency and the consequent primacy of procreation, leading to new types of social and domestic space and the possibility of communities of lesbians and gay men. D'Emilio's project is useful in identifying the relationship of economic conditions to social spaces, and the desires that can be expressed within them.

The Swimming-Pool Library depicts a world whose inhabitants are wealthy and who benefit from privileges afforded to the upper class. D'Emilio's point regarding the lack of social spaces that could be used to maintain homosexual identity in the pre-capitalist age perhaps has the exception of the landed aristocracy who, freed from the need to belong to a self-sufficient family unit, could create such spaces. However, the emphasis on procreation remained and Charles's and Will's twentieth

century lifestyles are distinguished by having no need to claim such association. Thus Will combines the freedom from family duties characterised in the modern age with that afforded by his reliance, not on his own wage-labour, but on that of others and can consequently choose his homosocial environment. Similarly, Edward's freedom from family constraints, emphasised in sections where he visits an old friend who is married with small children. He contrasts 'their doped surrender to domestic muddle, not enough letters on the fridge door to spell anything properly, the chairs covered in yoghurt,' with his own situation of 'running loose, swerving and tripping through the romantic undergrowth outside' (*The Folding Star*, p. 233; p. 238).

Christopher Lane argues that Will breaks through this barrier of class protection through exploring his sexuality: 'Beckwith's sexual excursions into different racial communities represent an adventurous departure from his own yuppie network of lords, barons and stockbrokers'.⁴¹ However, this is almost always tempered by Will's knowledge that, unlike the young black men he picks up at a gay disco, he is never without the taxi fare home. Jon Binnie writes of 1990s London, 'it must still be stressed that money is the major prerequisite and the greatest boundary for the construction of autonomous, independent assertive gay male subjectivities'.⁴² Even in the 1980s, much of Will's freedom to cruise for men arises from the degree of financial security which allows him the time and choice of environments he desires. His ability to live as an openly gay man, with no pressure from family or employment to do otherwise, is also dependent on his background.

Hollinghurst's novels emphasise the development of spaces which are produced as gay spaces. The term 'gay' is here employed following David Forrest, who suggests that gay is more appropriate in terms of an attitude that distinguishes

homosexually-identified men from heterosexually-identified men engaging in homosexual behaviour.⁴³ Alan Sinfield argues that since the development of the category of homosexual, gay male and lesbian communities have differed from other minority groups in that, 'instead of dispersing, we assemble'.⁴⁴ In some cases this means a concentration of gay men and/or lesbians in particular housing areas; often modern cities have developed a sector identified with gay and lesbian bars and clubs. However, any gay and lesbian community is largely constituted in the sense proposed by Benedict Anderson: that of an imagined community in which some kind of collectivity is supposed without most of the members of this community ever meeting each other.⁴⁵ Hollinghurst's novels depict both this type of community and a detailed account of spaces which are identified as gay, or significant in the construction and expression of male homosexual desire. This section discusses the ways in which what Bell and Valentine term the 'eroticised topographies' of gay spaces are mapped in Hollinghurst's work and will argue that such spaces both facilitate and restrict gay desire.⁴⁶

David Woodhead argues that gay spaces are discursively produced, that they are dependent on being perceived as gay spaces by a community or communities. Material spaces, such as cottages, or public toilets used for anonymous homosexual encounters, and gay clubs, both construct and are constructed by the social relations which produce gay identity. Woodhead posits that the link between the imagined spaces of gay communities and material gay spaces may not be absolute, but the two are complicit and inseparable nonetheless.⁴⁷ However, this relationship is not fixed, but is in a state of continual development. Not all men using material spaces for homosexual behaviour may identify as gay, while spaces not recognised as the site of

gay activity are, of course, inhabited by gay men. Moreover, the absence of direct correlation between these imagined spaces of gay community and the material spaces in which gay desire is facilitated and enacted challenges any homogenous representation of this gay identity. Accordingly, gay spaces are both produced by social relations and subject to the changes in these relations that are continually in development.

Hollinghurst's work demonstrates the complexity of the social relations which produce gay spaces. Set in the 1980s and 1990s, the novels reflect an increase in freedom for gay men, at least in comparison to earlier times referred to in the works. Both narrators can meet and evaluate potential sexual partners in the urban environment. Edward adapts to his new situation in a foreign country with ease, with the appearance of an unfamiliar single man exciting interest rather than hostility in the gay bars he immediately frequents. Thus his sexuality actively facilitates his social life; a heterosexual female would find it difficult and dangerous to make friends in the same way. Similarly, Will celebrates the 'sexed immediacy' of London life, with its multiple sexual opportunities (*The Swimming-Pool Library*, p. 5).

However, gay spaces continued to be defined partly through an uneasy relationship with heterosexual-dominated spaces. Gay life is represented as deviant, but also exciting and dynamic in its relation to public space. Edward's pupil, Luc, and his friends hold a bet on whether his teacher will be in a gay bar and are titillated by this space. Will's brother-in-law retreats from what he terms the "rather strong meat" of a homosexual art exhibition back to cosy domesticity (*The Swimming-Pool Library*, p. 233). Edward is scathing in his view of fatherhood and marriage, comparing a straight friend's life to his own: 'We were both men of the world, of

different but adjacent worlds; and we were about the same age now, although Willie seemed to me to have entered the placid, incurious middle phase, the semi-sedation of hetero expectations, whilst I was still running loose, swerving and tripping through the romantic undergrowth outside' (*The Folding Star*, p. 238). Edward thus associates homosexuality with spatial freedom, a literal escape from suburban rules and limitations.

However, this challenge to convention requires a marginalisation from a presupposed heterosexual norm, against which gay lifestyles are defined. Edward may be 'running loose', but gay life is sanctioned only in certain spaces: he is uncomfortable when a friend gropes him in a swimming pool, a public, and presumably heterosexual, space. However, this pressure helps to define both Edward and Will's worlds, distinguishing them from straight society and providing conventions within these boundaries which add to their sense of belonging and control. Such constraints as do exist can almost ease Will's relationships through their familiarity, as he discovers in his first, awkward, private encounter with a lover: 'Perhaps the fact that the restraints of the public space had been taken away made us feel unnatural, inept at using our freedom' (*The Swimming-Pool Library*, p. 106). The restrictions of gay space can offer an increased sense of belonging for those, like the two narrators, who feel they know the rules. In this way, the relationship between an assumed control of space and the formation of identity is rendered more complex.

The rules appropriate to particular environments stresses the need for performance of an assumed sexual role. Heterosexism ensures that gay expression is suppressed in much public space and that the narrators must alter their behaviour between sympathetic and potentially hostile environments, taking a prescribed place.

Arriving at a dinner party after an evening in a gay bar Edward feels a 'sense of dislocation, out of breath after running between one world and another, a smoky bar with a juke-box and the silent elegance of an unknown house' (*The Folding Star*, p. 33). During this dinner party, Edward feels compelled to hide his desires, unlike a heterosexual couple who are also present: as a married couple their choice of lifestyle is in accordance with the traditions of their society. Paul, the host of the party appears heterosexual, but hides a previous homosexual encounter. However, these desires, enacted in secret or restricted spaces, threaten the dominance of heterosexism by exposing the arbitrary and constructed nature of these barriers in which public performance is required from all parties, homosexual or heterosexual.

Problems arise, however, when men's behaviour is no longer appropriate in the areas they inhabit. Charles finds reconciling his memories of past lovers with their current situations difficult:

I wonder often, having no idea, having dreaded even to find out, what all those boys are doing now, hate to think that I remember them alone, while they - Brough where?, in the City? Webster doubtless in some easy colonial office - pass their days among casual acquaintances, returning home by train or trap in the evening to young wives, working out their plans... (*The Swimming-Pool Library*, p. 109)

He fears his former contemporaries have moved on from the licensed hedonism of public school to belong in the heterocentric world. He pictures them in dominant, official spaces, or travelling according to paths, literal and figurative, favoured by an adult society dominated by heterosexual codes of behaviour. Charles, by contrast, has moved to the margins of this society and even transgresses these borders, as his prison sentence confirms. Earlier, cloistered, rural retreats are replaced by the

multiple possibilities of the city, in which gay men must negotiate a network of spaces within others which may be indifferent or even hostile.

Will does refer to a gay tradition of enclosure explicitly at one point, as he tells his lover, Phil, 'It's the whole gay thing, isn't it? The unvoiced longing, the cloistered heart...' (p. 144). However, that this takes place in the context of a developing sexual relationship only emphasises the distance between Will's open and fulfilling sex life and previous restrictions. In general, Will is unconcerned by any external pressure and is able to express his homosexuality in each of the spaces he inhabits. In these spaces, it is heterosexuality that is outside the norm; Will's six-year-old nephew observes, 'almost everyone is homosexual, aren't they? Boys, I mean' (p. 61). Occasionally, however, the world outside these spaces intrudes: on the street, he resents the necessity of hiding the nature of his relationships, 'I wanted men to *walk out* together. I wanted a man to walk out *with*' (p. 194). More urgent are the violent reminders that many spaces are actively unsafe, pushing Will to a far greater degree of homosexual identification. After James has been arrested for soliciting, Will reports, 'James's experience, like mine with the skinheads, made me abruptly self-conscious, gave me an urge to solidarity with my kind that I wasn't used to in our liberal times' (p. 223).

Joseph Bristow observes that Hollinghurst's novel makes a series of references to the century of gay history that it effectively documents through the characters of Charles and Will. Characters and places are named after significant figures in gay history, from Labouchere, whose Amendment criminalised homosexual relations between men, to Queensberry, Oscar Wilde's chief antagonist. Most significant, perhaps, is the close echo of William Beckford, the author hounded out of England

after a scandalous homosexual affair, in the name of the narrator.⁴⁸ However, as Richard Dellamora notes, the novel depicts a series of attempts to fill in the ‘gaps’ of historical knowledge without ever fully completing the story. Will’s inability to write Charles’s memoirs explains why, ‘the book of gay history written in terms of the formation of identity – cannot be written’. The gaps that remain in the story – such as Charles’s ambiguous role in the entrapment of Will’s closest friend, James – ensure that, ‘as there is no master story, there is no single gay identity or collectivity’.⁴⁹ The notion of a unified gay identity or gay community is consistently undermined by challenges from within the text, which also stresses the ambiguity of supposedly gay spaces.

That these issues remain unresolved highlights the ambiguity of any acceptance of gay community or identity in the novel. Many of the attacks on homosexual behaviour come from within the community: Colin, the policeman who entraps and arrests James, has previously instigated and enjoyed sex with Will. Will’s own privileged lifestyle is dependent on his grandfather, the same man who, years earlier, is instrumental in imprisoning Charles. These points, together with the extremely heterogeneous range of gay men and experiences in the novel, illustrates the impossibility of fixing any identity or singular community. The novel supports David Forrest’s argument that, ‘any analysis of the changing nature of gay male identities must be able to confront, problematize and deconstruct “traditional” key concepts such as “identity”, “the masculine” and “gay oppression”’.⁵⁰

Gay spaces prove similarly ambiguous. The ‘gaps’ that Dellamora finds in *The Swimming-Pool Library*’s gay history make self-conscious reference to the inability of the texts to map gay spaces in ways which are not subject to challenges equivalent

to those they themselves present to dominant representations of heterosexual spaces. The final section of this chapter explores the extent to which Hollinghurst's narrative spaces both provide and challenge alternative maps at the intersection of sexual relations and the city environment.

Mapping Sex in the City

I wandered along and looked, tourist-like, at the Underground map. It was a clever piece of work, all the lines being made to run either up or down, or at forty-five degrees, so that the whole thing became a set of dissolving and interpenetrating parallelograms. It was perhaps only of that very stretch of the Central Line which I always travelled that its fastidious rectilinearity gave a true picture. (p. 46)

Will Beckwith has very specific reasons for taking an interest in the Tube. Banned from driving, he attempts to make the most of his time on public transport as a means of meeting partners for casual sexual encounters. Travelling in this way becomes inextricably associated with sex in Will's mind, as he reveals that even the shortest journey on Tube or bus always gives him an erection (p. 93). The map he admires, with its geometric approximation of train routes, is designed with clarity rather than representative accuracy in mind. Nonetheless, Will remains intrigued by the existence of a 'true picture' within the map's representative strategies. Hollinghurst's narratives of the city display similar mapping strategies in depicting scenes of gay experience. This section analyses the relationship between spatial narrative and the sexuality of the city in *The Swimming-Pool Library* and *The Folding Star*.

Ruth Fincher and Jane Jacobs argue that the city is particularly indicative of the variety of identities that are possible in relation to place on the grounds that 'social differences are gathered together in cities at unique scales and levels of intensity'.⁵¹

Kathleen Kirby describes the interrelation of place and identity thus: 'I take my place. Interactions in social space bring into articulation psychic frontiers and bodily surfaces, social and discursive outlines, and the seams of the fabric of the physical spaces'.⁵² She points out that the space we occupy interacts with the space of the body, an idea also supported by Nancy Duncan. Duncan writes that 'we now recognize that there can be no pure public spaces in which the liberal ideals of equality, impartiality and universality are achieved'. She argues that 'the materiality of our bodies is seen to exclude us from participating in an ideal of reason which "knows no sex", no embodied differences'.⁵³ Therefore, physical differences cannot be ignored in terms of access and mobility through social spaces. Kirby and Duncan both refer primarily to women's access to spaces, but their insistence on the materiality of spatial experience is equally applicable to other groups who are differentiated through ethnic features, age, health and the physical expression of desires considered deviant, including homosexual desire.

The implications of this physical positioning are clear for individual identity: Kirby stresses that culture will define oneself in a particular way, whether one sees oneself in this way or not.⁵⁴ However, Kirby's assertion highlights a further dilemma for theorists of identity, in suggesting a personal interpretation of identity that is set apart from the social. More accurately, perhaps, this emphasises the variable nature of the social and the consequent variety of available identities. Geraldine Pratt writes:

Rather than thinking about identities as solidified around one or two social traits such as ethnicity, or gender, or stage in the life cycle, or sexuality, identities are conceived as a process, as performed, and as unstable. Current theories call attention to the fact that we have multiple and sometimes contradictory subject positions and are sometimes torn between identifications, often moving between identifications in different situations and places.⁵⁵

Thus the identity of the individual is not located within the self or a particular social trait, but arises through a complex alignment of social circumstances which is also subject to change.

One of the ways in which behaviour is enacted in space is through sexual identities and practices. Theorists have focussed on both the variety of people inhabiting urban environments and particular characteristics associated with cities as a quintessentially (post)modern phenomenon. City spaces and sexualities each influence the other in a mutually constructive process. As Henning Bech contends, 'the city is not merely a stage on which a pre-existing, preconstructed sexuality is displayed and acted out; it is also a space where sexuality is generated'.⁵⁶ Bech's argument suggests that the interplay of social and spatial relations can be identified in the gay city spaces of Hollinghurst's novels.

The city is, of course, not the only possible space in which modern sexual relations can be enacted. Bech evokes city sexualities as an eroticisation of characteristics such as anonymity, consumerism and an emphasis on surfaces and the gaze.⁵⁷ However, as Lawrence Knopp notes in his analysis of Bech's terms, this argument is problematic as all these sexual experiences *do* take place outside the city. As a result, Knopp argues, 'The issue is not, therefore, whether or not a particular sexuality (or sexualities) attaches *necessarily* to the city, but rather how and why urban space has been sexualised in the particular way that it has'.⁵⁸ Spaces are produced in the city environment which in turn facilitate aspects such as anonymity and consumerism. Knopp makes the link between social interactions and the production of space:

Cities and sexualities both shape and are shaped by the dynamics of human social life. They reflect the ways in which social life is organised, the ways in which it is represented, perceived and understood, and the ways in which various groups cope with and react to these conditions.⁵⁹

This section, therefore, will concentrate on the ways in which urban space is sexualised in Hollinghurst's work.

Urban society offers opportunities for gay expression but also requires that it is classified and judged by this society. Will remembers the Swimming Pool Library, the scene of his first, wild sexual experimentation as the place where he truly wants to be. This "empty, empty place" with its "uncatalogued pleasures" provides freedom and protection from the limitations and definitions of the adult world (p. 141). Edward also differentiates his present from an idyllic past of sexual freedom, which begins with his love affair with another schoolboy, known as Dawn, in the semi-rural setting of his hometown. Edward's memories are of an era before the threat of AIDS altered perceptions of gay men's sexual possibilities and enforced new rules of behaviour which, he reflects, 'didn't quite come naturally' (*The Folding Star*, p. 56). That Dawn is dying of AIDS related illnesses further distances this earlier time from the reality of Edward's situation in the 1990s. Even the decidedly suburban setting of a sex club Edward has attended in younger days is described in pastoral terms:

The thought of those wild afternoons had me catching my breath to find I already had such epochs in me, and that I could look back through the drizzle of wasted time to arcadian clearings, remote and full of light and life. (p. 83)

Both narrators link sexual freedom with the removal of any definitions or judgements. Pleasurable feelings of belonging and control over an environment are

constructed by accepting the threat of the opposite: of alienation and loss. Again, Hollinghurst demonstrates the ambivalence of a community which both asserts and restricts gay identity.

The city facilitates the expression of gay desires through the range of spaces in which they can be enacted. Hollinghurst's narrators locate themselves in areas convivial to their sexual needs, apparently acting on individual desires. However, their surroundings are also crucial in constituting these desires. Both dress and behave in accordance with the conventions of European gay life; Edward feels reassured by his leather jacket in possible sexual encounters. Just as straight desires and relationships are influenced by convention, gay men and the attributes they are attracted to also correspond to the suggestions of the social world, through conventionalised ideas of beauty and sexual success. Spaces and social relationships influence each other in a continual process of interaction.

The characteristic geography of the city is also influential. The variety of gay bars and clubs allows the narrators to meet multiple sexual partners. However, while many of the sexual encounters in Hollinghurst's novels begin in these established gay spaces and are enacted in the private spaces of the home, both narrators also engage in anonymous and more public sexual relations. The novels depict the ambiguity of such experiences. Edward confirms of cruising, 'The absolute black ignorance was the beauty of it, and the bore' (p. 56). The encounter narrated is uninspiring, yet he continues, 'Once in a while you had the best time you'd had in two or three years' (p. 56). Cruising is not depicted as a purely celebratory activity, but neither is it condemned in any way; rather, the open-air spaces in which cruising takes place are positioned as part of the norm of the gay male city map. On the

Underground Will savours ‘the sudden precipitation of sex’ (*The Swimming-Pool Library*, p. 39). An anonymous seduction is described in detail but the actual physical encounter is not, implying that its very anonymity and transience is the primary erotic element (pp. 93-5). Such an encounter is, of course, possible in a rural environment, yet much of the detail involves the presence of non-participants in close proximity to the pick-up.

Henning Bech describes this city phenomenon:

There is also the *relation to those around* – the play on their possible non-involvement or involvement by watching, joining in, interrupting, condemning or prohibiting. Sexuality in the mass is always potentially sexuality of the mass; and it is inherently related to *public authority*, which may monitor and punish it.⁶⁰

Cruising for sexual partners results in an extremely private experience taking place in and through very public space and tension occurs through the blurring of the distinction between public and private. The individual is both denying these conventional boundaries and responding precisely to them. In accepting the influence of the public in adding a new dimension to desire, men who cruise also risk the censure of a hostile environment. Gay sexual activity is both facilitated and restricted through public spaces such as cottages. Woodhead describes sex in public as a forum for both sexual expression and its control, both protecting men and leaving them vulnerable to attack. An encounter in a cubicle, he claims, ‘not only entails a locking-out of the outside world, but also signifies an imprisonment. It is as if the criminalised couple or group is putting itself in an easy position for arrest’. Cottaging ‘becomes a space for the unclothed and the plainclothed’. A cottage appears in *The Swimming-Pool Library* only as the site of Charles’s near-fatal heart attack, yet

nowhere is the unclothed/plainclothed paradox clearer than in the situation of the policeman who appears twice in the context of emotionally uncommitted sex. Initially he enjoy a casual encounter with Will, but later entices and arrests his best friend for the very same intent. As Woodhead writes, 'the moment of resistance may actually be the very moment of government'.⁶¹

Anthony Giddens argues that anonymous sex expresses a unique equality, the only power residing in sexual practice itself.⁶² However, as Woodhead suggests, 'Anonymous sex may be represented as liberatory, yet that liberation would soon be marred if your partners(s) turned out to be either violent or "official", or both'.⁶³ Threats to this balance of power occur in Hollinghurst's novels when other factors invade in the shape of malicious policing or sexual violence. That these threats often come from within a potential gay community, supports Woodhead's assertion that there is no direct correspondence between the imagined space of this community and material gay spaces. Social relations develop in a manner which continually re-shapes spaces, and the behaviour that is permitted or encouraged within them.

Hollinghurst's narrators may reject the idea of a community to which they belong, preferring to position themselves as individual agents, for whom their sexuality is not a defining characteristic. Yet, as Will's reaction to his beating and his friend's arrest demonstrates, adopting a resistant gay identity may be strategically necessary at certain times. Michel Foucault warns that any movement concerned with 'sexual liberation' must acknowledge that it is starting from the point of a constructed notion of 'sexuality', even as it also resists that process of definition.⁶⁴ Throughout, *The Swimming-Pool Library* and *The Folding Star* reflect the paradox

of a community which both supports and restricts its members and of the ambivalence of a safe space which is defined by danger from outside.

Hollinghurst's novels highlight above all the complexity of the social relations which produce spaces. Analysis of the novels thus allows a concept of mapping strategies to develop from the focus of theorists such as Lefebvre and Jameson on a class-based means of resistance to a more wide-ranging representation of power relations in space. Colonial spaces are shown to be produced in accordance with imperial maps, yet these representations are also challenged by their partial and incomplete nature, which confirm that alternative conceptions of such spaces continue to exist. The novels map city spaces which are shown to be produced by a network of social interaction between heterogeneous and changeable groups. Hollinghurst's knowing and self-conscious narratives present fictional maps which explore new means of representing spaces while highlighting the need for continual re-investigation of such mappings.

¹ Alan Hollinghurst, *The Folding Star* (London: Vintage, 1995), p. 149.

² Alan Hollinghurst, *The Swimming-Pool Library* (London: Penguin, 1989), p. 180. Further references to this edition will be given after quotations in the text.

³ Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness with The Congo Diary*, ed. by Robert Hampson (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 112.

⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 28.

⁵ Lefebvre, p. 49.

⁶ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1995), p. 2.

⁷ Chris Tiffin and Alan Lawson, 'Introduction: The Textuality of Empire', in *De-Scribing Empire: Post-colonialism and Textuality*, ed. by Tiffin and Lawson (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 1-11 (p. 5).

⁸ Said, p. 3.

⁹ Tiffin and Lawson, pp. 1-11 (p. 3).

¹⁰ Tiffin and Lawson, pp. 1-11 (p. 3).

¹¹ Joseph Bristow, *Effeminate England: Homoerotic Writing After 1885* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995), p. 9.

¹² Bristow, p. 9. Hollinghurst refers to this distinction in an early poem:

Avoid these men who avoid
real men and manly sports,

who prefer to go bathing with the boys
and plan a pretty five-mile walk.

Alan Hollinghurst, *Confidential Chats with Boys* (Oxford: Sycamore Press, 1982), I.9.

¹³ Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 25-6. See also Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World* (London: Harper Collins, 1991) and Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992).

¹⁴ Said, p. 190

¹⁵ Joseph A. Boone, 'Vacation Cruises; or, The Homoerotics of Orientalism', *PMLA*, 110.1 (January 1995), 89-107 (p. 90).

¹⁶ For further discussion of the role of images of the desired African other in the novel see Brenda Cooper, 'Snapshots of Postcolonial Masculinities: Alan Hollinghurst's *The Swimming-Pool Library* and Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*', *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 34.1 (January 1999), 135-57.

¹⁷ Christopher Lane, *The Ruling Passion: British Colonial Allegory and the Paradox of Homosexual Desire* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 5.

¹⁸ Richard Dellamora, *Apocalyptic Overtures: Sexual Politics and the Sense of an Ending* (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 1994), p. 183.

¹⁹ Jonathon Dollimore, *Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 339, p. 337.

²⁰ Lane, p. 231.

²¹ Ross Chambers, 'Messing Around: Gayness and Loiterature in Alan Hollinghurst's *The Swimming-Pool Library*', in *Textuality and Sexuality: Reading Theories and Practices*, ed. by Judith Still and Michael Worton (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 207-17 (p. 211).

²² Bristow, p. 177-78.

²³ Hollinghurst, *The Folding Star*, p. 9. Further references to this edition will be given after quotations in the text.

²⁴ Lane, p. 230

²⁵ Lane, p. 231. Rushdie's comment can be found in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Granta, 1992), p. 92.

²⁶ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), p. 240; Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, (London: Verso, 1991), p. 431.

²⁷ Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), p. 149.

²⁸ The author Ronald Firbank appears briefly in the novel during a reminiscence of Charles's, while Will's best friend is a keen collector of his work. The novel's epigraph is taken from Firbank's 1923 novel, *The Flower beneath the Foot*.

²⁹ Vincent J. Del Casino Jr. and Stephen P. Hanna, 'Representations and Identities in Tourism Map Spaces', *Progress in Human Geography*, 24.1 (2000), 23-46 (p. 28).

³⁰ Del Casino and Hanna, 23-46, (p. 28).

³¹ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

³² Sedgwick, pp. 1-2.

³³ Sedgwick, p. 22.

³⁴ Alan Sinfield, *Gay and After* (London: Serpent's Tail, 1998), p. 106.

³⁵ Chambers, pp. 207-17 (p. 210). Chamber's reference is to *The Swimming-Pool Library*, p. 20.

³⁶ Dellamora, p. 177.

³⁷ Sedgwick, p. 86.

³⁸ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1981), p. 43.

³⁹ Lefebvre, p. 281.

⁴⁰ John D'Emilio, *Making Trouble: Essays on Gay History, Politics and the University* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 8.

⁴¹ Lane, p. 230.

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- ⁴² Jon Binnie, 'Trading Places: Consumption, Sexuality and the Production of Queer Space', in *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexuality*, ed. by David Bell and Gill Valentine (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 182-99 (p. 186).
- ⁴³ David Forrest, "'We're Here, We're Queer, and We're Not Going Shopping': Changing Gay Male Identities in Contemporary Britain", in *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies*, ed. by Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 97-110.
- ⁴⁴ Sinfield, p. 30.
- ⁴⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. edn (London: Verso, 1991).
- ⁴⁶ David Bell and Gill Valentine, 'Introduction: Orientations', in *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities*, ed. by Bell and Valentine (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 1-27 (p. 1).
- ⁴⁷ David Woodhead, 'Surveillant Gays: HIV, Space and the Constitution of Identities', in *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities*, ed. by Bell and Valentine (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 231-44.
- ⁴⁸ Bristow, pp. 174-5. See also Sedgwick, p. 96.
- ⁴⁹ Dellamora, p. 178, p. 191.
- ⁵⁰ Forrest, pp. 97-110 (p. 99).
- ⁵¹ Ruth Fincher and Jane M. Jacobs, 'Introduction', in *Cities of Difference*, ed. by Fincher and Jacobs (New York: The Guilford Press, 1998), pp. 1-25 (p. 1).
- ⁵² Kathleen M. Kirby, *Indifferent Boundaries: Spatial Concepts of Human Subjectivity* (New York: Guilford Press, 1996), p. 15.
- ⁵³ Nancy Duncan, 'Introduction: (Re)placings', in *Bodyspace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality*, ed. by Nancy Duncan (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 1-10 (p. 2).
- ⁵⁴ Kirby, p. 33.
- ⁵⁵ Geraldine Pratt, 'Grids of Difference: Place and Identity Formation', in *Cities of Difference*, ed. by Fincher and Jacobs (New York: The Guilford Press, 1998), pp. 26-48 (p. 26).
- ⁵⁶ Henning Bech, *Where Men Meet: Homosexuality and Modernity*, trans. by Teresa Mesquit and Tim Davis (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), p. 111.
- ⁵⁷ Henning Bech, 'Citysex: Representing Lust in Public', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 15.3-4 (1998), 215-41 (p. 219).
- ⁵⁸ Lawrence Knopp, 'Sexuality and Urban Space: A Framework for Analysis', in *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities*, ed. by Bell and Valentine (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 149-61 (p. 160, footnote to p. 152).
- ⁵⁹ Knopp, pp. 149-61 (p. 149).
- ⁶⁰ Bech, 'Citysex', 215-41 (p. 220).
- ⁶¹ Woodhead, pp. 231-44 (p. 239).
- ⁶² Anthony Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), p. 147.
- ⁶³ Woodhead, pp. 231-44 (p. 239).
- ⁶⁴ Michel Foucault, 'Power and Sex', trans. by David J. Parent, in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and other Writings 1977-1984*, ed. by Lawrence D Kritzman (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 110-24 (p. 114-5).

Conclusion

How many maps, in the descriptive or geographical sense, might be needed to deal exhaustively with a given space, to code and decode all its meanings and contents? It is doubtful whether a finite number can ever be given in answer to this sort of question. (Henri Lefebvre)¹

Fictional maps provide new representations of spaces which participate in the infinite process described by Lefebvre. He continues, 'The idea that a small number of maps or even a single (and singular) map might be sufficient can only apply in a specialized area of study whose own self-affirmation depends on isolation from its context'.² It has never been suggested, of course, that a single work of fiction could ever be 'sufficient' in this way, yet Lefebvre's comment also highlights that alternative representations exist outside the dominant discourse. Fiction from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries can be shown to map colonial spaces in a way that confirms imperialist assumptions and renders them seemingly neutral. However, following Said, Spivak and Bhabha, critical readings of colonial fiction have highlighted the inconsistencies in these imperialist assumptions, which in themselves challenge the idea that the colonial relationship can be represented in a straightforward and singular manner.³ Reasserting the 'context' of colonial fictions ensures that the representations promoted can continue to be read in a number of ways. While imperial fictions themselves demonstrate varied and contradictory representations, postcolonial novels go further in developing alternative ways of understanding the world. Importantly, and as Lefebvre's comment on the infinity of descriptive maps suggests, the novels discussed in this thesis provide alternative mappings which explicitly foreground the incomplete nature of this process.

My analysis of 'the adventures of space' has demonstrated that fictional maps are highly politicised.⁴ Fictional maps represent spaces, but do more than describe a physical environment. In depicting the desert, for example, Ondaatje does not simply represent its contours and area. The desert becomes a space in which colonial relations are enacted, and in which social conflict produces new spatial experiences. Similarly, Rushdie and Hollinghurst each portray spaces which are not innate, but produced and changeable. These narratives confirm that the spaces of the nation and of the city are produced by identifying the various social relations whose interaction creates both dominant and resistant representations of these spaces.

Texts by Rushdie, Ondaatje and Hollinghurst demonstrate the use of mapping strategies which are comparable to those found in theoretical works. Lefebvre's work brings together an awareness of the political nature of representation and of the production of spaces according to social relations. Fictional maps can therefore be read as narratives which foreground the political consequences of spatial representations. Moreover, they also parallel theoretical explorations in using mapping strategies to describe the positioning of individuals in the world, and the network of global relations that defines this environment. Jameson's concept of cognitive mapping has been analysed in order to establish both the potential and the pitfalls of mapping global relations. This analysis found that neither fictional nor theoretical maps can present a complete representation of the totality of spaces. Rushdie's work, it has been demonstrated, comes to similar conclusions, despite the attempts of his narrators to 'See the whole world!'.⁵ The tendency of Jameson's well-intentioned mappings to reproduce some of the dominant understandings of spaces which they aim to challenge is also paralleled by the sometimes ambiguous political

strategies of the novels. In each case, the novels use postmodern techniques which foreground the issues of representation which Jameson discusses in his work, and which, my analysis suggests, he identifies as a positive characteristic of cognitive mapping. All three novelists depict power relations of the kind described by Foucault, in which individual agents occupy varying positions of dominance and resistance. Hollinghurst's work, in particular, illustrates the complexity of power relations and posits multiple subject positions from which his fictional maps develop.

On this basis, both theoretical and fictional mappings also demonstrate the difficulties of legitimating a map aimed at promoting resistance, as mapping remains a representational medium. Throughout my research into contemporary mapping strategies, I have found it necessary to focus on the ambivalences which remain in cartographic readings of power and resistance. Such ambivalences reflect both the postmodern and postcolonial aspects of the fiction. Previous studies of mapping in fiction have focused on postcolonial and feminist rewritings of spatial representations and have usefully highlighted the potential of such strategies as a means of resistance.⁶ However, while previous studies of literary mappings have been useful guides for this thesis, it has become apparent during my research that ambiguities in literary mappings continue to posit a highly complex network of power relations in which mapping strategies both enact and resist dominant representations of spaces. Postcolonial writing focuses on spatial tensions and resistance, yet the theory and fiction analysed in this thesis negotiate resistant representations of space which remain themselves subject to challenge.

Similarly, new mappings in postmodern theory and fiction are characterised by ambivalence, as concerns over representation and legitimation are foregrounded. The

'breaking up of the grand Narratives' heralded by Lyotard allows moves to challenge previously dominant representations, but also precludes any attempt to establish a definitive alternative.⁷ My contention regarding postmodern theory and fiction is that both can be seen to share the use of mapping strategies through the problematising of the representational forms they employ. In each case, both theory and fiction continue to interrogate their mapping strategies in order to highlight the potential for reproduction of dominant understandings of spaces within their resistant representations. The self-conscious narratives employed by all three of the novels illustrate, rather than obscure, the necessarily subjective nature of map-drawing.

Each of my chapters uses novels from a particular author to emphasise one of three main aspects of fictional mapping. Rushdie's work explicitly engages with the representational questions which mapping strategies must continue to explore. My analysis of Ondaatje's fiction argues that his increasing use of mapping strategies is accompanied by a corresponding increase in political commitment. Hollinghurst's novels provide continual reminders of the complexity of social relations, while widening out the field of inquiry to consider the equally complex nature of the spaces these relations produce. Analysis of these writers provides a basis from which future studies of fictional maps can develop.

Areas of further research which could be developed from points raised in this study include the analysis of mapping strategies in works by other writers who work on the boundaries of postcolonial and postmodern fiction. Examples include novelists such as Peter Carey, Louise Erdrich and Bharati Mukherjee. The differences between these works also highlights the potential for studies to concentrate on representations of particular spaces. While this thesis has compared

writing from different countries in order to establish ambivalence as a general characteristic of mapping strategies, a focus on specific regions may produce differing results.

While this study has focused on postcolonial spaces, my final chapter on Hollinghurst suggests that fiction can map spaces as products of other types of social relations. While there is no scope in this thesis to do more than observe the complexity of social relations and provide some introductory pointers, future studies may explore fictional maps which demonstrate that spaces are produced according to social relations of sexuality, gender, class or other groupings. Needless to say, and as my final chapter demonstrates, these social groupings do not exist in isolation from each other. Further research may establish similarities and variations both between and within representational spaces that are produced by these social relations.

Equally, work on fictional mapping in the future may concentrate on other theoretical aspects which are outwith the scope of this work. My case study of Fredric Jameson's cognitive mapping was selected in order to reflect my focus on the political commitment of mapping strategies. Other theorists who use cartographic models in differing and even conflicting ways to Jameson are also worthy of consideration. Deleuze and Guattari in particular offer a very different conception of mapping, whose relationship with fictional maps could be analysed in turn.⁸

Finally, I suggest that this thesis be considered as an initial investigation into the study of fictional mapping. My analysis has confirmed the existence of mapping strategies in contemporary fiction, and found that ambiguities in the texts reflect the tensions that continue to exist in theoretical explorations of mapping. Mapping strategies, therefore, are not evaluated as inherently resistant or reactionary, but as

processes which explore the continuing potential for resistant representations of spaces. The starting point of this work was Salman Rushdie's assertion that writers provide 'imaginative maps' for their readers, and that *Midnight's Children* is an attempt to map the new country of India.⁹ Throughout, I have established that fictional maps both highlight the social production of spaces and explore resistant potential. Above all, this thesis argues for the production of theoretical and fictional maps which will continue to reflect development and change in social and spatial relations.

¹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 85.

² Lefebvre, p. 86.

³ See, for example, Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays on Cultural Politics* (London: Routledge, 1988); Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

⁴ Fredric Jameson, 'Spatial Systems in *North by Northwest*', in *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Lacan (But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock)*, ed. by Slavoj Žižek (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 47-72 (p. 51).

⁵ Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (London: Vintage, 1995), p. 75.

⁶ See, for example, Graham Huggan, *Territorial Disputes: Maps and Mapping Strategies in Contemporary Canadian and Australian Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), and Marlene Goldman, *Paths of Desire: Images of Exploration and Mapping in Canadian Women's Writing* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

⁷ Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), p. 15.

⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi (London: Althone Press, 1988).

⁹ Salman Rushdie with Una Chaudhuri, 'Imaginative Maps: Excerpts from a Conversation with Salman Rushdie', http://www.trill-home.com/rushdie/uc_maps.html.

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